Dearing and Derrida, a strange double guard

On *Higher Education in the learning society*

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Abstract

The 'Dearing Report', Higher Education in the learning society, was published by the UK's National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education in July 1997. It was represented mainly as an attempt to rescue the tertiary sector of education in the UK from a financial crisis. To achieve that, it would seek to introduce tuition fees and to extend central control of teaching, learning and—to an extent—research activities in universities and colleges. A view of the Report as proposing a programme of administrative reforms is confirmed by the Committee's terms of reference and by the gist of its huge Report of findings and recommendations.

A closer reading of the Report's text shows that the Inquiry saw itself as inaugurating a radical, phased overhaul of all higher educational activities in the UK. The Inquiry's various committees conducted wide-ranging investigations, the findings called for social and cultural shifts toward 'the learning society' and the Report proclaimed itself as the successor to the renowned Robbins Committee's Higher Education Report of 1963.

This dissertation responds to the disparity between the view of administrative reform and that of radical departures. It does so by attending over-closely, in several modes of linguistic and figural analysis-plus-synthesis ('recordance'), to the text of the Dearing Inquiry's Summary Report. It applies reflexive, textual techniques (etymological, exegetic, metaphysical and mimetic). It finds a profusion of rhetorical and allusive language throughout the sample text. The words resolve themselves into themes and interplays of ideas, yet recurrent attempts to interpret them are overtaken by indeterminacy ('aporia') of meaning. This groundwork stops short of offering a coherent set of proposals as to what the Dearing Inquiry, in its more radical moments, was trying to express. However the inter-disciplinary approach used may, it is hoped, prove valuable in 'loosening up' the language of other contrary texts.

Acknowledgements

My main adviser for this research at the University of Bristol has been Professor Rosamund Sutherland of the Graduate School of Education. Drawing on her academic experience and breadth of interests, she exercised unstinting patience and helpfulness through all its stages. Her postgraduate students formed a diverse and lively community for intellectual ideas and support. My second adviser was Dr Judith Squires of the Department of Politics. She provided particular guidance on theoretical sources, especially those of post-structuralist thinkers. Both advisers sustained discussions across academic domains in provocative, reflexive ways that were essential to this project. Their encouragement, insights and contacts were indispensable in the absence until quite recently of close precedents or of similar, concurrent research projects.

On a personal basis, I owe the whole experience to Harriet Webb. She made possible a long spell away from paid work, followed by a phased return during which I could complete the research. She provided many thoughtful discussions along the way and helped immensely to bring the whole thing together at the end. I can only express my love and gratitude to her and our family: Michael with Meg, Belinda with Newman and now Shona, Alasdair and one yet to be born. In a previous generation, there was my father Arthur's zest for science and his sister Mary's artistry; my late mother Margaret's encouragement of learning and her sister Mary Ann's instruction by example. My sisters Shiena and Moraig set their own examples in life, work and learning, as continued by two more generations of their families. My mentors at Back School, Nairn Academy and Aberdeen University are almost all deceased now, yet this is a time in which to remember them.

Returning to Bristol: Dr Carolyn Wilde at the Department of Philosophy provided a critical intervention as my examiner for this MSc upgrade. She was also a valued mentor on aesthetics and critical art theory. Her colleague Dr Paul Pritchard shared his enthusiasm for, and understanding of, ancient Greek language and culture.

I am indebted to the present and former staff members and students of the Graduate School of Education with whose encouragement I conducted the research. In particular, Dr Sally Barnes, Professor Guy Claxton and Dr Michael Crossley were each inspirational in person and through their works. Among the support staff, Jan Archer, Sarah Brownhill, Mary O'Connell, Jacqui Upcott and the library staff kept the messages, advice and material flowing in both directions. On an earlier course at the Department for Adult and Continuing Education, I benefited especially from the guidance of Professor Ted Thomas, Dr Elizabeth Bird (now MBE) and the late Don Vallis.

Colleagues in charge of my authoring 'day-jobs' enabled me to work part-time and were wholly supportive of my research. Phil Hobbs, Nicky Ferguson and Simon Price encouraged me in the early stages at the Institute for Learning and Research Technology, University of Bristol. More recently Robin Martin and Pierre de Bailliencourt at Control Technology International in the ARC Informatique group have made completion possible.

The ideas that informed my research project arose from contact with tutors on the first MSc course in *Ecology and Society* at the University of the West of England. Peter Jowers introduced me to critical theory, post-structuralism and

Jacques Derrida's *œuvre*. Dr Ian Welsh explained about new social movements and environmental issues, while Professor Harry Rothman outlined ecological models. At Cranfield University in 1985-6, Sandy Cotter and Dr Ido van der Heijden tutored me into a long-term, personal exploration that has continued with this research project.

Several authors provided direct assistance. I particularly wish to thank Professor Samuel Weber (University of California, Los Angeles) and Professor George Monbiot (when visiting the University of Bristol) who kindly sent me pre-publication drafts of their works. Dr Simon Morgan-Wortham (University of Portsmouth), Professor Christopher Norris (University of Wales, Cardiff) and Professor of Latin Emeritus Niall Rudd (University of Bristol) also sustained crucial exchanges.

To each person who helped and put up with me through this adventurous project I offer my heartfelt thanks. Any mistakes and oversights are entirely my responsibility.

Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree.

Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Bristol.

The dissertation has not been presented to any other University for examination either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

SIGNED: 

John Murdo MacLeod Webb

DATE: 16th. July 2004.

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Conventions

The following conventions are chosen to suit the textual nature of the material.

References

Rounded brackets '(...)' are used in the ordinary manner. I also use them to quote items from lexicons (dictionaries and glossaries) and to cite paragraphs of the sample text. For all other references I use square brackets: '[...]'. The latter references are quoted *verbatim* whereas the lexical definitions are edited for consistency in this context.

Quotations

Single quotation marks '...' delimit a quotation in the flow of the text. Double quotation marks "..." replace single ones in the original text of an inline quotation. I use square brackets to mark any adjustment that I have made to the text of a quotation. Quotations of three lines or longer are shown as indented, single-spaced paragraphs.

Without comment, I remove styles from quotations when that styling only serves to index items (as in Brown & Dowling [1998], to refer to terms in its glossary) rather than to emphasise words or phrases.

Styling

Asides are shown in boxes, single spaced, starting with 'Aside:...'.

Italics are used ordinarily for emphasis, also to refer to headwords (word-roots) and to mark expressions as problematic.

The sign '•' is conventional in post-structuralist writing. It marks a potential instance of *aporia*: an undecideable interplay of interdependent, juxtaposed terms that need not be opposites e.g. '*participation* • *exclusion*'.
Greek words are shown in Roman characters for my informal phonetic rendering in the dissertation. For more precision, a subset of a Greek alphabet is used in the *Glossary of Ideas and Etymologies* on the CD-ROM.

1 Openings

About this dissertation

So far, we have a title to work with: a *working title*, at least. This section outlines the dissertation's research topic, its orientation, rationale, intended readership and intellectual approach. These features are organised and expressed in a manner adapted from the *mode of interrogation* for *action research*, as outlined by Andrew Brown and Paul Dowling [1998 chapter 8, especially pp.137-140 and 147-9].

First we will 'unpack' the references in the dissertation's title:

> Dearing and Derrida, a strange double guard
>
> On *Higher Education in the learning society*

The word 'Dearing' refers to the Dearing Inquiry that was conducted in 1996-7 at the behest of the Government of the UK. Its informal name refers to the chairperson, Ronald (or Ron) Dearing, after whom the Committee was informally named. Its formal name was the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education. That title invokes a historical view or vision that is broadly progressive, State-centred, neo-liberal and economic in its orientation.

'Derrida' refers to a radical, linguistic turn of thinking from the 1960s onwards among 'Western' intellectuals and academics, though it may be traced to earlier, non-Western sources. It uses the surname of a contemporary academic philosopher, Jacques Derrida, to signify interlaced strands of theory and practice labelled 'post-structuralism' and within that movement, 'deconstruction' (also sometimes, in my view confusingly, 'post-modern'). Again in my view, that linguistic turn was not entirely original, in view of creative and poetic traditions. The juxtaposing of 'Dearing' and 'Derrida' in the title presents an odd coupling that, on closer inspection, would yield features in common by way of social justice, of wide-ranging interactions and of calling entrenched positions into question.

The phrase 'a strange double guard' gestures to the saying 'who keeps watch on the watchkeepers themselves?' ('*quis custodiet ipsos custodes*?' [Roger Scruton 1982 p.241]). If as unlikely a couple as the Dearing-of-the-texts and the Derrida-of-other-texts suggest some commonality and—who knows?—complicity and collusion, perhaps they are taking alternate watches on the station that guards our interests. We should keep an eye on them. Trust *us* though, we may urge; for we have your best interests at heart.

The final phrase 'On *Higher Education in the learning society*' cites the title of the Dearing Inquiry's Report [July 1997]. It indicates that our gaze will be directed toward that text, or at least a fragment of it, rather than to the Committee or its context. In some ways we will generate a fictive (imaginary, strung-together) context for the Committee-of-the-text, despite ready access to many perspectival accounts (economic, political, social, technological, ethical etc.) of its work and effects.

Even as this document's title diverts our gaze elsewhere, its arrangement draws attention to itself by æsthetic mannerisms. They include those of identity (whether the guard, and-or the dissertation, is *on*...), of its allusion (to the 'double guard' that Jacques Derrida assigns to the university to watch over itself [In J. Derrida 1984a pp.26-7]) and of its vocal rhythm (*staccato*, then a drum-roll *diminuendo*).

Empirical field and setting

In Andrew Brown and Paul Dowling's [1998 p.141] schema for *action research*, the empirical field of a research project 'may be glossed as the broad range of practices and experiences to which the research relates'. It constitutes a community or communities of practitioners. The educational examples of action research that Brown and Dowling provide are 'the management of schools or children learning mathematics or attitudes to alcohol' plus the activity of teaching (rather than working as an educational researcher).

Here in this dissertation the empirical field is that of reading official documents of a particular kind: proposals for central government policy. We do not focus in this context on the merits of the proposals or the presentation of arguments to justify them. Rather we consider the text of the document(s) in quite a material, empirical sense. Policy proposal documents are not all of equal interest in this context, while some sections of a document may turn out to be more interesting than others. To explain why that is so, we risk straying into the theoretical field. I shall try to keep the empirical and theoretical 'levels' distinct for the moment, to stay within Brown and Dowling's explanatory framework.

Official documents must make sense in a supremely rational manner. Those that propose a revision or change of policies (most usually a mixture of both, plus retention of policy) must justify their recommendations and-or their draft statements of policy. Despite the close relation of 'policy' and 'politics', a rationale grounded in political realities cannot suffice: negotiation among the interested parties, coercive threats, deals struck, favours returned, dividing of spoils—all that must be dressed up and suppressed before the document sees the light of day. What appears in public, in the place of politics, must convey the plain facts of the matter by setting out the proposals and the (usually quantified) arguments both for it and against the alternatives considered. The resulting text need not be dispassionate. Expressions of commitment and the righting of wrongs are in order both for their principled stance and the authenticity they bestow by invoking a sublime calling beyond secular dispute.

We may thus narrow the empirical field here to policy proposals that especially 'play to the gallery' through rhetorical language, figures of speech and modes of presentation. This is ethically dangerous ground, since linguistic tools are necessary for presenting proposals in any political domain. Perhaps only edicts under emergency powers can dispense with them. A plain statement that is read impassively is of no direct interest here. Neither is a polemic tract that makes no convincing pretence of impartiality and rational disinterest. We can now make a plain statement—if possible—of the empirical field:

> What is of most interest here is any document that purports to present a wholly rational, disinterested set of proposals yet resorts to a variety of linguistic flourishes to present its case.

Such a document knows, so to speak, that it has work to do on us. We are perceived to need to be worked over, and won over, to its point of view. At least

we need to be lulled into submission, into going along and letting things pass. Yet we face a choice: we can accept a passage and let it *wash over* our senses; or we can sustain our attention, looking askance as it gestures, as we *listen* actively to our reading-aloud, closely, literally and-or critically. That is when *reading* becomes an uncalled-for mode of *writing* in(to) the place of the address.

The particular, empirical setting for this dissertation is that of reading the Summary Report of the Dearing Inquiry, as noted above. [National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (NCIHE) 1997] It is the source of the text on which the research project for this dissertation conducted its experiments.

I am using the term 'empirical' in a particular sense:

> OHD: *empiric(al)* relying on observation and experiment, not theory; Liddell: *empeiria* (in + try) experience, acquaintance; *empeiros* practised; e.g. *empeirvs tinos ekhein* to know a thing by its issue.

Here 'empirical' does not refer to the objects or conduct of the Dearing Inquiry, the event of its Report or any impacts in the aftermath. Rather it refers to artificial 'outcomes': observations of what the sample text 'comes to say' under experimental conditions. In the setting of a language laboratory that may resemble the post-processing of transcripts from a series of interviews.

> Aside: However from a linguist's perspective it probably strays into the fun-house of mirrors next door. There it approaches the jewelled gateway to the garden of spent inscriptions and ambivalently panned (out) dissertations.

Theoretical field

In Brown and Dowling's schema, a theoretical field is composed in part of *genres of reflection*; a hall of mirrors, if you like. Here we can invoke the tradition of *exegesis* (OHD: exposition; from *hegeomai* to lead): close, reflective reading of and commentary upon a text. Exegetic writing does not replace its object, nor expect to have the last word in the movement of interpretation. It leads us for a while by providing a layer of commentary on a text. If the act of writing is always, already provisional (yet subject to original and revelatory events), then the 'first' text defers its fulfilment to the commentary. The next commentary on both of those texts gives way to subsequent or perhaps parallel, interwoven notes, and so on. Such is the practice and genre of exegesis; in a broad sense, it need not be confined to the act of writing. Specifically, this dissertation inhabits the space of commentaries on policy proposals and other official or systemic documents. Just as the Dearing Report is manifestly a political 'player' that ostensibly addresses a central Government yet knowingly performs to various audiences, this dissertation purports to address the Report punctually yet releases its readings-askance in different directions.

The *action research* framework posits a *notional community* in a theoretical field. For this dissertation's *apostrophe* (commemorative address) that notional community includes such textual beings—risk-taking writers and readers-askance—as the late Bill Readings, Gregory L. Ulmer, Maggie MacLure and Ian Stronach. The bibliographical references and further reading lists note some of their works and the next three chapters touch on their intellectual *praxis*. Another notional community of writers is engaged 'closer in' to higher educational reform: David Watson, Andrew Brown and Paul Dowling, for instance. In my view they conduct linguistic analyses constructively, within bounded perspectives (with

safety nets, so to speak) and are complicit with their texts by oscillating between critique and recovery of intentions. In a muted mode, that can have unsettling, even deconstructive and transformative, effects through an insider's gauging of the points of leverage (so to speak) for a textual shift by consensus.

Further out from this dissertation are orbits at a steeper angle to the (cultural, secular) ecliptic plane, though our paths often intersect. The writers of the online journals CTHEORY and The Culture Machine, such as Samuel Weber, Arthur and Marilouise Kroker and Simon Morgan Wortham, write more widely and spectacularly than is usual in academic practice. Across the strands or paths mentioned above, there are the tracks of the pioneering post-structuralists such as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Paul de Man, Joseph Beuys, etc. Often they theorise about theory; they genealogise genealogy, re-structure architecture, (de-)scribe the history of the institution (any institution, Romantic-ally in ruins) and bear witness to hybridising events of texts in general. It is customary for such writers to indulge in cryptic allusions and aphorisms, and to leave their textual player-recorders running in their wake.

> Aside: Structuring the void beyond petty reason or recall are the Elders or Elvers or Embers (the archives are so difficult to read!) of the order: Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Antonin Artaud, Friedrich Nietzsche; plus other marks that we can no longer decipher. Someone has tried to obliterate the names, over and over again.

Problematic

Brown & Dowling [1998 p.140] define the problematic of a piece of research as 'a specialization within ... a diverse range of motives and genres'. Here the problematic is that of the interpretation of discursive texts. Interpretation has its being at a level of abstraction from the object of its gaze. It performs an act of reconstruction in an unruly terrain [M. Leiris 1976] which is the *place of the address* where words take root in contending discourses.

The specific problem of interpretation is the problem of (self-)interpretation by the text. We can express that as a question, without expecting a simple response:

> *Does the sample of the Dearing Vision (re-)present itself consistently from diverse perspectives or in modes of reading-as-writing?*

In a holographic (OHD: whole writing) way, a text might present various perspectives on a consistent scene. In a kaleidoscopic (OHD: *kalos eidos* beautiful form) manner, it might afford a consistent scene of fragmentation. Unless a sample is cunningly crafted for textual resistance against our complicity, we would expect the results of our untoward experiments to exhibit traits of those kinds and perhaps others besides.

> Aside: For our part, unless we remain gazing through the gate, we will soon lose-and-find (our)selves serenely beyond the looking-glasses, with fading recollections of what we came to say. [cf. Dan Rose 1990, for non-acquisitive anthropology] The text, of course, was always waiting for this opportunity to experiment on us.

Rationale

> Another side: We attain our most serious moments in the place of laughter and forgetting. You can find it, as it can find you, if you care enough to let go; through the gate of two owls at twilight when things could be going either way. Friedrich Nietzsche will smile in step with you.

At the end of the project, which is also the end of the movement of forgetting, comes the re-membering. The university, as a rational animal, must have its reasons along the way to sustain it to the end of its reason-for-being (*raison d'être*). The project that has let go of its principles to take part in the Action (as performance)—not just to *see* action, but to *be* in motion through action research—must re-collect a rationale with which to withstand the hard-eyed gaze of the academy. (How do we think the academy got there, unless it understood what we have been up to from the outset, as that which was compliditly *to-come*?) So, it is time to render a reasonable account of this project in terms of the doubly guarded university that demands its re-markable dues. [cf. Jacques Derrida 1984a pp.5-6, citing Heidegger citing Leibniz]

This research project became fixated by the Dearing Committee's opening call for opinions, proposals and—well, anything that could be subsumed into submission as evidence to its subcommittees' hearings. On a personal level, I felt the urge to respond in some way because I regarded the Committee's implicit agenda as riven with gaps and contradictions. Those turned out to be largely attributable to its terms of reference. That in turn resulted from the political compromise that negotiated the conditions for its being appointed at all. There was no time to lose in view of a looming economic, social, cultural and (though this must be pre-empted at almost any cost to democracy) political crisis.

The Committee and its structure of sub-committees was organised, energetic and productive; an efficient machine rather than a reflective or radically transformative process. The huge gaps appeared to me to reside behind the gestures toward continuing education (*adult* is now a deprecated term), the creative arts and industries, the need for material and cultural opportunity from infancy toward higher *education* (not just degrees-on-paper), and so forth. The contradictions were so rampant that we can let them loose to speak for and among themselves later. What I lacked was a practical approach for freeing the anomalies from the discourse and somehow articulating a response in time. Will this dissertation have done that, for you?

> Have I said it, or done it? ... Only others can answer. Beginning with you. [J. Derrida 1984a, ending, p.27]

Had I responded to the Dearing Inquiry on its schedule, would one more personal submission or my contribution to a joint response have made a whit of difference? Only to me, and even then inadequately. What dawned on me was that the Inquiry, for all its desires and excursions, had a fixed destination. Though it would fulfil that rendezvous and be duly rewarded with (in)gratitude, the Inquiry would make its mark. As it happens, I am submitting this dissertation at the start of what would have been the second round—the 'medium term'—of the programme set before us in the Vision of Dearing. Is this too late, or commemoratively just in time? What can be the gestural value of an untimely *apostrophe* (OHD: an exclamatory address, a turning away) to the Vision of the Dearing Inquiry? Perhaps an apostrophe could make a difference sometimes, if only we knew where to put it.

What I have come to say is none of that, but genealogically speaking to claim that the effort has been worthwhile, if only for me. I have learned various ways of 'loosening up' a text so to let go of what else it has come to say or inscribe in our memories. That is not wholly convincing, by any means. For one thing, the approaches, techniques and tools with which I-you (and-or-as the text) is-are experimenting here may not come up with the goods on demand, on other occasions, in time. For another, there may well be any number of more efficient, effective and-or creative approaches available. If so, at least I should now be better placed to select and deploy them in time from now on.

> Aside: Affirmatively speaking—I have experimented on other texts with each of the approaches. I exclude those iterative attempts from this dissertation on the grounds of their being relatively too refined and pragmatic to count as experiments.

What has worked well and been timely in this research project has been participation in events: conferences, seminars, symposia and less formal exchanges with postgraduate students and scholars, academic and 'free-range' intellectuals, support staff and administrators (often alongside our 'day jobs'). In a fast-moving, eclectic, trans-disciplinary or adisciplinary field of inquiry, such role categories are refreshingly unimportant. I just hope, as the ultimate rationale for this research, that it has repaid some of the creative stimulation it received from those encounters. We may view the research project as having been subsumed into the work-in-progress that is always, already moving on.

Intended readership

This dissertation is intended especially for reference, rather than study, by postgraduate students. It may however be useful to anyone who is looking for experimental testimonies and case-studies in applying linguistic approaches to social-scientific and-or political texts. I suggest that it is best suited for reference since it would have been written differently for reading and instructional purposes. It tries to provide an account of a set of experiments, as 'freshly' as possible, *just as* each experiment was conducted for the first time. These are not showcases of good practice, in the sense of optimised accounts of processes on-or-by texts in conditions assured (by selection, re-runs and presentation) of a favourable outcome. In any case, specialist scholars in the fields this touches will have their own repertoire of approaches, with techniques, tools and reference materials that this project could not encompass.

Field knowledge

In Brown & Dowling's schema, [1998 p.139] field knowledge is 'assumed by a text which indexes but which does not elaborate upon its authorities'. Here the extent of prior understanding required depends on your purpose. In the table below, I have tried to anticipate a few of broad purposes, in the hope that one or more may resemble your motives for consulting this document.

Table 1 - Field knowledge

To explore	Prerequisites	References in/to
Key sources used or noted for this project	To bring your key terms for searching.	Bibliography and its supplement on CDROM
Risks of dissertation	To have a notion of what research you propose to do, in which context.	Chapter 4, especially *Sensitivities*
Issues of higher education & university	Familiarity with political conditions in the UK in the mid-1980s to mid-1990s.	Chapter 2 and the supplement *Glossary of Issues of HE.*
Post-structural approaches	Some understanding of which 'post-structural' outlooks suit your context.	Chapters 3 & 4
Linguistic analysis	(Consult specialist sources)	Chapters 3 & 5
Philosophical implications	(Consult specialist sources)	Chapters 4 (*Philosophical*) & 6
Etymology	(Consult specialist sources)	Chapters 4 (*Etymology*), 5 & 8
Deconstruction	(Consult specialist sources)	Chapters 3 & 4 *Deconstruction/Aporia.* Chapter 6 (*Poetry...*)
Institutional rhetoric	Basics of semiotics and discourse analysis.	Chapter 3 (*Analysis...*)
Analysis of ideologies	(Consult specialist sources)	Chapters 4 & 6 (*politics* & *Truth*)
Religious/transcendent connotations	Some sense of divinity, the natural or literary sublime and-or justice.	Chapter 6 (*religious Truth; poetry...*)
Artworks for points of departure	Basics of semiotics; perhaps early Renaissance or early Modernist works.	Chapters 3 (*Imaginative*) & 7

The phrase 'Consult specialist sources.' indicates that original practices within disciplinary areas that are mimicked in this dissertation should be observed instead of the exploratory gambits to be found here. This cautionary note applies in large measure to the entire scope of this dissertation. The research was designed to conduct several forays across disciplinary boundaries, as if to travel light both ways. If you propose instead to conduct research that builds on, updates or reinforces a particular inter-disciplinary 'bridge' or gateway, there is no substitute to becoming qualified in both domains. Then perhaps your research project can oscillate between your two 'homes' until your 'causeway' emerges.

Special reflections

There are a few composite areas at whose nexus I suggest that this dissertation affords a glimpse of things beyond, or out of, the ordinary. However inadequately they are articulated here—perhaps since the sublime resides in the experience of that moment—I tentatively list these few co-ordinates (impressions, hunches, aphorisms or commonplaces) without claim or elaboration:

Table 2 - Reflections

Languages speak	All through us, though we know them not.
Mimetic departures	Enlivening a bureaucratic text from an artwork.
Metaphysics	Toward which æsthetics, mimetics, philosophy, poetics, politology, theology and theoretical understandings in general gesture.
Post-structural thinking and deconstruction	Toward a charismatic praxis of learning and teaching.
Sensitivities	Probing particular micro-cultural limits. [cf. Tony Becher 1989]

Intellectual approach

Chapter 4, *Approach*, describes the approaches and techniques that are used in the substantive chapters (5 to 8) of this dissertation. It outlines the precedents or concurrent projects most closely related to its approach(es). Chapter 3, *Literature Review*, cites a wider range of sources so as to position this research project and dissertation among the sources and projects in related theoretical and-or empirical fields. Here I shall just provide a brief statement as to intellectual approach.

Soon it will be necessary, with gratitude and goodwill, to part company with the schema or framework of *action research* provided by Andrew Brown and Paul Dowling [1998 chapter 8]. Its authors explicitly mark the terrain of their theoretic and exemplary practices as being *for educational settings*, though not exclusively so [1998, cover]. As they explain, their epistemology adheres to a largely constructivist view in which 'The research process ... begins with vagueness and hesitancy and plurality and moves toward precision and coherence.' They claim that *coherence* is 'the fundamental criterion by which educational research must be judged.' and that 'Research must be generalized and generalizable in relation to its local empirical contexts.' They also recognise, and largely convey in the earlier chapters, a *realist* epistemology in which you 'consider yourself to be engaged in the discovery of order.' I value their position, since they are writing *for* educational researchers *as* educational researchers themselves.

In their terms, this dissertation does not reflect an educational research project. I am not claiming that this dissertation has no real bearing on higher education, the university or policy-making for that matter. Rather I offer it as an exploratory first step that seeks potentially useful resources with no more than a hope that they might prove useful. Such is the way of *dissemination*. (OHD: scattering, e.g. of sedition.) All the same, I shall borrow some of Brown & Dowling's expressions to outline my intellectual approach.

The mode of research of this project is one that mimics (demonstrates and-or feigns) the discovery of patterns of order in the rhetorical language of policy proposals, or at least those that it finds in one fragment of a policy document. It also mimics the construction of snippets of thinking (sayings, epithets and commonplaces) from a pulverised or otherwise harassed text. It favours creative excursions in place of interpretive caution, yet deploys some rigorous, repetitive techniques to sustain its flights of fancy. To a large extent it performs a kind of anthropology, by deploying linguistic artefacts out of their habitual, cultural contexts. This presupposes, as a productive fiction, the existence of academic disciplines uncontaminated by each other's ways of thinking. The techniques of undue attention, by the way, include etymology, analysis of word and phrase frequencies and their collocation (as in concordance), metaphysical reveries (e.g. party-political analysis) and the juxtaposing of an artwork (as text) with the sample (again, text) and technique (also as text) to be overtaken by any events that transpire.

Aside: This dissertation declines (apart from making the vague gestures) to generalise its applicability or to compose any coherent conclusion from its acts of dissemination. It tries to excuse this unruly conduct by claiming that each reader (as a writer) brings coherence and a local context to the dissertation, so it would be rude to usurp that prerogative. Convene the court. This should not take long.

Chapter summaries

This thesis starts from a premise that bureaucratic initiatives have overlooked aspirational motives—perhaps enlightened, moral and æsthetic—of which traces may persist in the Committee's findings. It treats the Committee's 'vision for 20 years: the learning society' as a rich source of inspiration that should not be reduced, without remainder, to a table of edicts for cost reductions and administrative controls. To do so, it attends closely and over-literally to its chosen fragment of text from the Report's *Summary* statement.

Chapter 2, *Context*, provides an outline of contemporary (mid-1990s) issues in and around *higher education* and *the university*. It cites sources for further reading on each issue.

In Chapter 3, *Literature review*, a search of the literature on *higher education* and *the university* provides some precedents or comparable, contemporary projects and sources for this project's approach by way of discourse analysis and modes of critical theorising. Some of these sources resist a dominant theme in a text in order to promote a counter-theme, such as *mass higher education* against *academic élitism*. A few sources caution against excess. For instance, Jacques Derrida's [1984a] essay on The Principle of Reason: The University in the Eyes of its Pupils seeks a balance (an gaze alternately 'blinking' outward and inward) between application of technology and scholarly research. The feature of Derrida's work that this dissertation seeks to revisit is that of radical uncertainty arising from the discursive language of the text. Rather than transfix the Dearing vision with an overriding point of view, it illustrates openings onto vistas of potential significance, yet does not pursue them to any summative end.

Chapter 4, *Approach*, explains this aleatory (chancy) approach, then cites the closest precedents and contemporary sources. It accepts that in adopting its approach of borrowing or mimicking techniques across academic boundaries, this dissertation risks causing offence to committed empiricists, pragmatists and specialised theorists.

The substantive chapters, 5 to 8, do not build on each other in a progressive manner toward a grand revelation. Instead they compose utterances disjointly, each in turn, from topics of the Dearing text. They do not confine that text to an administrative lobby, so to speak, but invite it to take part in semblances or performances of literary, philosophical and cultural studies.

Chapter 5, *Deconstructions*, engages in a concordance (or *recordance*) of the sample text. Specifically, it analyses the frequencies with which words and phrases occur together throughout the sample. From the most frequent collocations (i.e. occurrences together) assisted by etymology (linguistic derivation), it composes short, speculative sayings. These take part in (often contradictory) interplays of meaning. The effect is to 'loosen up' the text of the Committee's Vision without laying claim to any profound revelation. When the concordance is over, the chapter has no more to say. It does not conjure up a world of truth beyond the text, but is at pains to reveal only the material basis of the utterances it provokes. Above all, it does not denounce the Dearing Vision for being riddled with contradictions. Rather, it affords an experience to which at least one witness, you the reader, may bring unexpected significance. Perhaps some key phrases emerge to unlock communication in your present, or perhaps you as reader-writer assemble a loose patchwork of understanding for the historical context of the Dearing Inquiry. Those potentials are out of reach of this chapter in its materiality as medium and text.

Chapter 6, *Implications*, imports an existing framework of ideas with which to re-examine the Dearing Vision: that of Robert Young's essay The Idea of a Chrestomathic University. [In R. Rand 1992/1987] The framework comprises several domains of truth: *religious truth*, *the truth of reason* and *poetic truth*, plus the *politics of truth* or the *truth of politics*. With frequent help from Derrida's The Principle of Reason... [1984a] and other theoretical works, the chapter incites the Dearing Vision to open onto each of these domains of thinking and to respond with themes of its own substance. The Vision is not cornered, so to speak, into making a single commitment while forsaking other potentials. It is not bound to bring about an envisaged state of affairs by means of economic command and control. Rather, this chapter celebrates with and through the Dearing Vision the appearance of many truths (Truths) and an unexpected openness to whatever may befall.

Chapter 7, *Disseminations*, resorts to a third 'ready-made' object or approach to prompt its reading of the sample text. Its chosen object is a photograph of a performance artwork: Joseph Beuys's 'Action' or Happening called *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*. [as pictured in Ute Klophaus 1965 plus commentary in G.L. Ulmer 1985] As the chapter moves through sections of the sample text, it draws out tentative analogies with Beuys's Action. Neither Beuys's Action nor the Dearing Inquiry's Vision offers us a clear blueprint for a model society. Yet both gesture toward potentials, as it were by provoking a *middle voice* that speaks of its own accord through us, its reader-writers or mediums. We become witnesses to vistas of futility and surprise, and to the Dearing Inquiry's unsteady gait between vocal 'levers of control' and muted 'eventual action' for social justice.

Chapter 8, *Re-membering...* is conventionally tempted to say something, anything at all, conclusive about the Dearing Inquiry. Rather, it re-visits the topics of conversation among the unexpectedly fertile Vision of the Dearing Report and Derrida's, Young's, Beuys's, etc. provocative texts. This Chapter's reminiscence reveals any number of further points of departure in yet more texts. Perhaps the choice or coming-to-hand of the sample text for this research was quite arbitrary and any other text could have served in its place. Even if so, this dissertation acknowledges both the Vision's neo-liberal efforts at inspiration and its desire for progressive effects well beyond the time and place of its publication.

Reading on

Table 1 above has pointed to sources of reference in the chapters of this dissertation. With few exceptions, the works cited in those chapters provide further reference lists, indexes, glossaries, theoretical and practical guidance, and so forth. In some cases, they largely or entirely consist of such resources. Often their exemplary texts and explanatory notes outweigh the narrative content, almost as a point of style. There is a super-abundance of relevant theoretical works. A proportion or genre of those sources partakes in convoluted æsthetics and mimetics of theorisation. There is also an abundant literature on empirical and theoretically-informed research of tertiary (and continuing) provision of, and participation in, learning, education and training. The discursive terrain of *higher education*, *the university* and *continuing* or *lifelong* (etc.) *learning* is a natural habitat for reflexive investigation, especially the *action research* on which Brown & Dowling elaborate as noted above. [1998 and other works]. It is also a scene of the deadly serious play of *hyper-reflexivity*, where the most anodyne texts of the

bureaucratic and academic system linguistically turn upon their institutional mouthpieces in a theatre of Artaudian, *strewking* cruelty.

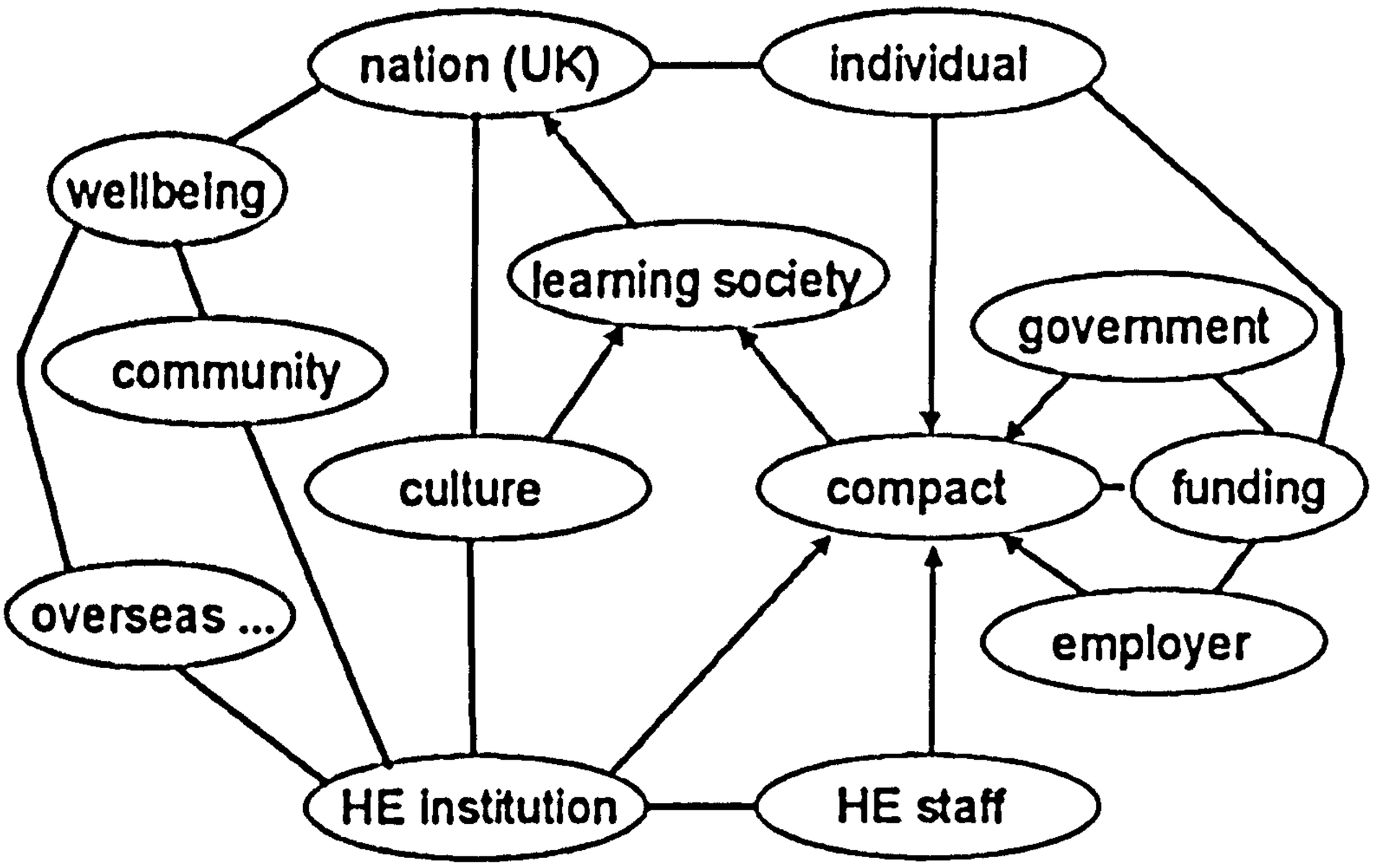
Despite that variety of sources, there remains a scarcity of experimental works that demonstrate, or mimic, techniques adopted from other 'disciplinary' areas and applied to policy proposals and suchlike. Many do so instrumentally to further a particular cause, or they deliver a critique on political or sociological grounds. Relatively few 'lock in' to an experimental circuit that uses techniques and texts reflexively to relate the project's experience (i.e. as *action research*) and leave its overall synthesis (scavenging for resources) up to the reader-as-writer. That demand for effort would risk attracting few or no readers, since in general readers want results: summaries, conclusions, worked-out examples and-or energising critique. However there are precedents for an outlet or escape route for reflexive experimentation that 'carries off' its performance with verve and style. I shall call one such avenue *principled indeterminacy* with reader-writer collusion. 'It'—this imaginative genre-to-be—only goes in for *hyper*-reflexivity on occasion, perhaps in a multiple and-or bizarre final chapter when the writer-reader has probably already overtaken or been deserted by the text. Maggie MacLure and Ian Stronach's paper [1994] *Deconstructing the Notion of Policy Hysteria...* and their subsequent book Educational Research Undone... [Stronach and MacLure 1997] are exemplars of such a mode of investigation.

2 Context

Overview

As a point of departure, here is my impression—in Semantic Web terms, an *ontology*—of how some prominent topics in the Dearing Report relate to each other:

Figure 1 - Topics of the Dearing Report



This chapter briefly outlines the political context of the Dearing Inquiry—formally, the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, NCIHE—which accomplished its work in the 14 months from May 1996 to July 1997. Various articles, books, journals, conference papers and online sources of commentary about the Inquiry and its Report were published before, during and after that period. Such publications appeared in the UK in English, mainly during 1996 to 1999. Further texts appeared and discussions were held in many countries and languages, in print and on the Internet. My project did not include empirical research of the Inquiry's causes, proceedings or aftermath; and it may be too soon—just six years after publication of its Report—to sum up its effects. To give even a sketchy account of its context I must rely on contemporary, and more recent, published accounts of that context.

Chapter 4, *Literature Review*, includes a section titled *Background to the Dearing Inquiry 1996-7* that outlines a selection of published sources that have an explicit bearing on the work of the Dearing Committee.

> Aside: A supplementary document on the CD-ROM, *Glossary of Issues of Higher Education*, outlines the context of the Dearing Inquiry. There I draw on my own impressions plus a somewhat arbitrary selection of sources. These works are English-language commentaries on *higher education* and *the university* in recent decades, including some critiques that I found helpful for framing my research project.
>
> My impressions are inevitably contaminated with hindsight, so you should not treat that glossary as historical apart from its references to sources. The latter are various 'histories of the present'. They include contemporary (mid-1990s), earlier and later accounts by researchers and commentators in the field of *higher education* and *the university*

Some questions on issues

The table below lists some of the key issues that critical commentators consider variously to have given rise to the Dearing Inquiry, surrounded it and survived it more-or-less intact albeit in somewhat altered forms. The categories ('Aims' etc.) are built on those suggested by W. Taylor [2002, abstract]. The 'Issue' column gives a plain name to identify an area of concern. The 'Question' makes an issue's meaning more explicit in terms of motives to improve and-or reform higher education and its context. The 'Keywords' are some of the labels that often appear in the political discourse of policy proposals, institutional mission statements and the like.

Table 3 - Some topical issues

Issue	Question	Keywords
Aims (principles)		
Purpose(s)	In future, what should *higher education* and *the university* be for?	*mission, devolution, strategy*
Activities	What should they do?	*teaching, learning, scholarship, research*
Content	Of what shall higher education consist? What will people learn?	*curriculum, programme*
Access		
Eligibility	Who shall obtain ('buy' or 'be entitled to') it?	*access, wider participation*
Accountability		
Automation	How shall they be equipped? How can we monitor activities?	*communications, information, technology*
Control	Who shall determine the activities of higher educational institutions?	*accountable, democratic, responsive*
Fitness	How shall we recognise acceptable results?	*quality, standards*

Outcomes	**What shall we recognise as accomplishment?**	***qualification, award***
Structure	**How shall institutions be run?**	***discipline, management, governance***
Trust	**Whose interests will policy proposals serve?**	***believe, ensure, depend***
Boundaries		
Territory	**Across what geographical—and-or 'virtual'—areas should they operate?**	***local, regional, global/world***
Funding		
Funding	**Who shall pay for higher education—and what is it worth, and to whom?**	***fees, grants, value***
Provision	**What kinds of agents and facilities shall impart higher educational experience?**	***diversity, deliver, resources, providers***
Inspiration		
Esteem	**How can we put teaching on a par with research?**	***professional***
Passion	**How can we and our students engage with our subject-matter?**	***scholarship, 'for its own sake'***
Novelty	**How can we bring forth new things?**	***creative, arts, innovative***
National interests		
Exports	**How can higher education enhance our national prestige and balance of trade?**	***global, world class***
Programmes	**How can government and industry adapt the UK workforces to their needs?**	***the learning society***
Productivity		
Duration	**How can students seek a 'deep' understanding without longer courses and-or higher drop-out rates?**	***depth* versus *breadth***
Media	**How can we generate more publishable material?**	***information, knowledge, understanding***
Resources		
Premises	**Where shall higher educational institutions be accommodated?**	***estate, infrastructure, private, initiative***
Workers	**Who shall perform higher educational activities?**	***staff***
Technology		
Initial training	**How can we assist people to express thoughts articulately?**	***basic/ communication skills, literacy, numeracy***
Occupation	**How shall we equip people to work?**	***training, vocational, transferable, skills***
(Re-)training	**How can learning continue beyond full-time education?**	***lifelong learning, flexibility, adapt***
Textbooks, models	**How can we put 'teaching and learning' materials into electronic formats?**	***courseware***

> Aside: The table above presents my personal selection of issues that are pertinent to the debate in and around higher education policy. Such lists and glossaries are commonplace among researchers and commentators in this field of study. For contemporary (mid-1990s) examples, see Malcolm Tight [1999] on 'myths' and Sinclair Goodlad [1995] on 'heresies'.

This table of 'issues' is far from comprehensive and is highly reductive in providing such a categorical list. In practice, the themes are closely interrelated, if only by way of tension (through antithesis and competing interests). Much of the energy of the political rhetoric of 'Middle Way' discourse was produced by combining terms as if doing so would reconcile their inherent tensions, e.g. 'knowledge and understanding for its own sake' *[sic]* and 'sustainable development'. Those linguistic structures persist and shape our thinking even at the time of writing.

3 Literature Review

The limits of re-viewing

A *review* (OHD: view again) re-visits or imagines a scene that is, or once was, more-or-less familiar either to the reviewer(s) or to persons who once acted in that setting. This chapter re-assembles published sources that made a vital contribution to my research project and tries to explain their influence. It does not attempt do so comprehensively. That is not for lack of a bibliographic record but so as to provide a brief, coherent account of this dissertation's main roots. An inter-disciplinary project such as this, in what has transpired to be a fast-evolving area of study, picks up too many strands of thinking along the way. Few of them may turn out to have a direct bearing on the end result. Since one person or team's exploration may serve in another project's development, I provide a further, classified bibliography in an electronic supplement to the dissertation.

The next section, *Stepping-stones*, identifies some sources that I came across when I had chosen an area of study but had not yet defined a project. I sensed that they might well be important in my general quest (for a specific quest) but at the time I could not yet say why. The sections after that are broadly related to the analyses-plus-syntheses of chapters 5-7 in this dissertation—respectively linguistic, philosophical and literary (or mimetic) in their approaches to the sample text they share. *Analysis of institutional rhetoric* refers the reader to works that analyse the words and phrases of a text for their symbolic import and figurative effects. The third section, *Deconstructive readings*, focuses more narrowly on sources with a deconstructive bent, i.e. that conjure radically undecideable (*aporetic*) views of their sample texts. The final section on *Imaginative connotations* seeks examples of writers who draw critical inspiration from works of art. I do not mean that directly (in a representative sense) as in the *tableaux* of political satire. Rather I mean: referring obliquely, by whether by analogy with contemporary views of *higher education* or through mimetic performance in regard to *the university*, as in the works of Gregory Ulmer and Simon Morgan Wortham.

In these four main sections I give preference to sources that analyse the discourses of policy-forming texts for national, governmental purposes. Yet if a source's approach is of exemplary relevance, as in the work of James Armstrong [DERIDASC reports, 2002-3], I do not hesitate to include it in preference to various less relevant modes of policy-oriented critique. Some of the most relevant texts, like Armstrong's, came into view (or at least to my notice) quite late in this project. They provided me with much-needed reassurance for finishing what had until then seemed to me a somewhat isolated and speculative task that might be unduly risky in relation to the process of academic peer review.

Post-structuralism—to which the mode of this research may approximate—is a diverse field in which highly competent and cautious scholars may sometimes, regrettably in my view, express judgements and engage in forays outside of their specialist areas. Those opinions can be based more on hearsay than understanding and may even overlook elements of their own research.

For you the reader the recent blossoming of relevant material in print and on the Internet may have the benefit, in what I see as a fast-changing scene, of affording more recent readings than would otherwise be the case. However, I also have the feeling that this dissertation and many like it are mainly following through the implications of key thinkers of the whole 20th century, just as they in their time pursued thinking and experimentation from earlier sources. Any 'ultimate' sources, here as always, rest beyond the reach of our eyes and minds, unless we resort to some dogmatic, genealogical short-cut to provide a 'given' origin in time and texts.

Stepping-stones

At the outset of this research, before it was a definite project, I was working with educational materials. It became apparent to me what a vital part these were (always, already) 'beginning' to play, not just for special applications like distance learning but in main-stream, full-time studies. In the guise of 'study skills' tuition, they tended to address students in crucial phases of their studies. These occasions tended to occur variously at the outset, during examinations, for job-hunting and (as a stepping-stone to professional help) in any period of personal crisis. I also became concerned that an approach of 'one size fits all' across students' subject areas and life situations might entail risks of mis-guidance. Those risks might not be apparent without close examination across a variety of circumstances, including cultural context and personality traits. Audio-visual components of those 'study' or 'learning' materials seemed to be especially influential in their affects. I was particularly impressed with graphic designers' professional sensitivity to the affects of shapes, colours, gradations and visual movements.

I became aware of the increased reliance on self-study materials at a time when the demographic profile of students, the ways of studying and some social expectations of colleges and universities were rapidly changing and diversifying. My chief concern was that producers of such materials, as I then was, would often have no way of avoiding some culturally or personally inappropriate contents. It was a small step from there to my coming to view educational materials in general as conveying particular, and often unintended, perspectives and ideologies.

There was nothing original about my line of thinking. Indeed I have come to the view that without critically aware cultural scrutiny, some of what passes itself off as *higher* education could be counted as occupational training. I do not assert that in order to devalue training of any kind; I just uphold a particular concept of higher education. This is not a negative thing, since I regard cultural awareness—indeterminable experiences of 'self' and of 'other'—as a fertile prerequisite and ongoing element of productive learning situations. Training, and the roles of educational materials, are integral components of higher education. However they cannot suffice for that purpose, nor can we treat them as 'neutral' or inherently less value-laden than other texts.

A collection of essays that I found especially helpful in opening up that perspective conveys Elizabeth Ellsworth and Mariamne H. Whatley's analysis [as editors, 1990] of educational films: The Ideology of Images in Educational Media: Hidden Curriculums in the Classroom. For this dissertation, their phrase 'imaging the future' is particularly apposite:

> Through representation and narratives, educational media play a central role in education's project of imaging the future and offering students a place to stand in it.
>
> However ... not all visions of the future are benign. [M. Ellsworth 1990, p. 11]

I picked up that phrase from a recent commentary that sets Ellsworth and Whatley's book in the context of contemporary, critical works in the field of educational technology: Kristin Parker's [2000] *Art, Science and the Importance of Aesthetics in Instructional Design*. Parker calls for graphic designers and instructional designers to acquire each other's analytical, creative and critical skills so that together they can transcend the all-to-frequent separation of, and the conflicts between, the form and content of instructional materials.

My next stepping-stone, so to speak, into this research project was Paul Dowling's doctoral dissertation at the Institute of Education, University of London: A Language for the Sociological Description of Pedagogic Texts ... [1993; developed into a book on 'social activity theory': P. Dowling 1998]. This is a sociological, empirical analysis of two series of textbooks. Dowling wrote of the social 'mythologising' of knowledge, in the sense of 'abstracting it from the social bases of its elaboration' while 'the world is constituted as a reservoir of resources' for mathematical exercises. [P. Dowling 1993 p.2; see also p.25 and p.384] The exemplary 'myths' that he maps in the sample texts include those of *reference*, *participation*, *emancipation* and *construction*. However he did not set out to expose ideologies in school textbooks, nor was he under any illusion of being able to sanitise existing texts against bias or to generate value-free materials. His project was technical: to 'generate a language [of description] which enables the movement between social structure and textual reading'. [P. Dowling 1993 p.42]

At several points in his overall analysis, a myth is found to deconstruct itself, in that it assumes on the reader's part a prerequisite attribute for learning that it also precludes. [P. Dowling 1993, e.g. pp.278 and p.314 on *the myth of participation* and p.295 on *the myth of competence*] The main value that Dowling foresees for his language of description is to enable materials to be translated between contexts in educational practice. He identifies a secondary use as a tool for further research. [P. Dowling 1993 p.390]

Certain features of Paul Dowling's research attracted my interest as a precedent for my as yet unfocused project. He draws on a range of thinkers to furnish theoretical propositions. (The main ones are listed on p.2, then elaborated with others in his chapter 3 on pp.50-86.) He examines the appearance (layout, choice of images, etc.) of the textual samples as closely as the wording. He also strives for explicit 'visibility' of his own sociological practice and to ensure that 'The products of sociological labour ... be made available for appropriation by the educational practitioner.' The 'gaze' that this proposes 'must be introjective' so that it recognises 'the possibility of the other in oneself'. He conceives of 'the human subject as comprised of multiple subject positions' so that 'the educational practitioner who is also a sociologist can galvanise dead sociological labour within their educational practice, not to prescribe, but to systematise and to interrogate.' [P. Dowling 1993 p.389]

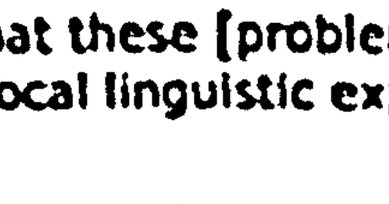
He acknowledges the necessity of a professional gaze, turns it on his own practice in an exemplary manner, builds that reflexivity into the systematic 'package' he provides and spells out the risks of putting it into practice without that double guard in position. His caution and rigour in developing and grounding the descriptive language served to protect his thesis, I surmise, at some cost to the portability of his analytical tool into other pedagogical contexts.

The analyses in Paul Dowling's dissertation step through a series of fragments of the sample texts. These illustrations—he has a keen eye for the visual—help us to follow his arguments and to mimic his procedure. The area of application is precise and selective; he presents the exemplars that best explain his system. His subsequent book, essays and talks trace a trajectory from the textual space of his thesis toward much wider applicability of his systematic language. (I think that we could apply the language recursively to demonstrate that, as follows.) The theoretical work that Dowling's dissertation re-presents endorses re-use of the linguistic method that it proposes. Even in a brief seminar, training session, application or project report, we would expect to find references back to its published text to convey that endorsement. Yet to validate the shorthand form of the grounding, we would have to return to the original site of the address in his dissertation. These are elements of an acute textual awareness combined with a flair for systematising the mode of analysis.

My second exhibit (or stepping-stone) precisely addresses the problematic of the origin-in-general. It is Jacques Derrida's first book [1962, in its first English edition]: *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry, an Introduction*. My immediate fascination with this source arose from the treatment of its sample text from Husserl. Derrida's book swallowed it whole after translation from German, then digested it at far greater length than that of the original text. Derrida stayed mindful of the original language, plus its complex linguistic and philosophical provenance. The result in my view is like a temple erected around a shrine; it upholds yet overwhelms the origin, its intellectual wellspring, in a single constructive movement. On first reading this book, I gained little more than a sense of bafflement from Derrida's exegesis, but rather took to Husserl's fictive theory of earth-measurement (*geometry*, the reckoning of distances, areas and volumes).

That raises a general point about reading and especially about understanding a commentary beyond accepting it at face value. We need first to become familiar with the text that it-and-we together rework (by re-presentation through our act of reading). Yet what we have understood by interpretation may form a practice or tradition by re-applying precisely what we have gleaned from the source. To tap the source as faithfully as possible, we would have to consult it again (as if for the first time). Abstraction has to depend on a kind of forgetfulness. In a nutshell: Husserl saw writing—material inscription—as a means of preserving a founding act to make it repeatable, even when no-one is re-enacting or can even remember it. Since, in Husserl's view as in Aristotle's, words correspond uniquely and stably to things (univocity), we are able to interpret an inscription to regain the knowledge it inscribed. Derrida raised objections to that view, to the effect that writing only comes to life in the linguistic act of reading. If the script is lost, or if no-one ever reads it, it is never actualised. I have based this caricature on Paul Brady's [2002] précis; it concludes on univocity:

> [Husserl] believes that these [problems] can be overcome by "painstaking" effort to secure univocal linguistic expression.
>
> But, as Derrida points out, if this ideal could be realised meanings would be rendered ahistorical and made impoverished; they would no longer be suggestive. Univocity would "paralyse history in the indigence of an indefinite iteration."
>
> [The o]ther extreme is the sort of radical equivocity exemplified in [James Joyce's] Finnegan's Wake where every word is saturated with a range of possible meanings and associations almost to the point of becoming unintelligible.



> The dissemination wrought by iteration (repetition and alterity), that Derrida reveals, lies between these two extremes. Stability and suggestiveness, tradition and transgression are both needed and run together.

The notion of univocity—stable word-object relations—provides a vital clue to the impressions whereby texts solicit our passive acceptance, whether they are portrayed as 'value-neutral' textbooks or policy proposals. Derrida then shows how even the most precise and scientific description requires reconstitutive language to enliven it, to re-connect to its original object. This makes inevitable both writing's forgetfulness and language's prior inscription. We are required to return (impossibly, in principle) to the originary event before we can establish a meaning for a text.

These sources I now declare to have been vital stepping-stones toward grounding, and for accepting the impossibility of ever fully grounding, this dissertation. It need not surprise us that they variously address, and duly problematise, texts about educational images and mathematics. A particular interplay is at work here. In my view it is that of whether model or language should be constructive (consistent as a whole, as for mathematical systems or computer programming, conjuring idealised objects, rules and behaviours) or is required realistically to comprehend a specific, but not necessarily consistent or definite, 'world'.

However there is nothing necessary or inevitable about that selection of sources. With hindsight, I could have stumbled into the project from several other directions. One obvious candidate is that of political analysis of public rhetoric or 'spin', converging on higher education and the university. A potential source that I had read much earlier is J.B. Priestley's The Image Men [1968 and 1976]. From there one could take a big step Brian Salter and Ted Tapper's book The State and Higher Education [1994]. Then it would be a mere skip into Frank Coffield's critique of UK and EC policy in *A Tale Of Three Little Pigs: Building The Learning Society With Straw* [1996] and its relation to Dearing [1997]. The Dearing Report also provides a critique of a public rhetoric that privileges research and the academic, by presenting them on pedestals amid tactical silences.

Analysis of institutional rhetoric

Now that we have noted the possibility of retrojecting alternative paths 'as if' destined to reach a particular point, it becomes easy to bring more and different sources into play. What follows is a *genealogy*—a mythologised provenance—of sources that I would like to have used, subject to mutual availability for my project (I to recognise their potentials and they to guide me).

I will first cite Judith Bessant's essay *Dawkins' Higher Education Reforms and How Metaphors Work in Policy Making* [2002]. It provides a critique of the official, rhetorical discourse relating to reform of Australian tertiary education. In particular it traces the usage and effects of metaphors of several kinds in promoting and reinforcing an economic, liberal world-view. These include introductory ('pedagogical' or illustrative) metaphors such as: *middle-class welfare* and *private beneficiary*. There are modelling metaphors ('heuristic', to explain by comparison or resemblance) including: *market place, flexibility, global* and *compete*. Then there are conceptualising (*constitutive*, linking) metaphors such as *higher education system* and *human capital*. Bessant concludes this lucid critique [2002 p.97] with a rallying call to the effect that:

> considering the official rhetoric in higher education reform offers opportunities to change these accounts and to replace them with entirely new frameworks for understanding issues around learning, research, teaching, etc.

This bipolar view (in my view) provides a hard-eyed gaze on the political scene. It is unclouded by reflexive doubts, openness to counter-critique or any of our (or at least, my) complicities in the prevailing order of things.

A more complex model is presented in George Monbiot's book [2000 and 2001] Captive State: the Corporate Takeover of Britain, especially chapter 9: *Silent Science - The Corporate Takeover of the Universities* [pp.281-301]. In it, the interests that pervade the places of learning and research seek to control not only activities and outcomes but also ways of seeing and of thinking [p.301]:

> [T]he takeover of science leads directly to the corporate takeover of teaching.
> In both universities and schools, corporate teaching materials, advertisements and even, in some cases, educational programmes appear disguised subtly to influence the way in which the student views the world. Business now stands as a guard dog at the gates of perception. Only the enquiries which suit its needs are allowed to pass.

The next critical resource I wish to inject into this fictive genealogy is a set of comments by D. Love and Y.H. Malan [1999] on policy proposals at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa. It addresses a single issue, while citing Jacques Derrida, Emmanual Levinas and Zygmunt Bauman: that of diversity and unconditional responsibility for the other person. In their context, the authors regard that responsibility as 'essential for the addressing of past (and present) injustices'.

Love & Malan provide a close reading of a South African policy proposal, Higher Education Transformation Strategy of the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) in 1996. They do so in a set of comments on a local discussion document about that public report. They are operating in a multi-cultural context with deep schisms and entrenched privileges, including cultural supremacy and a tradition of excluding the other. They deploy more strategic and reciprocal thinking resources than does Bessant's critique. They may thus be less vulnerable to outflanking, 'wrong-footing' by reversal of their arguments or confrontation, when raising the stakes. Resentment, frustration, passive resistance and gradual, mutual recognition of ways ahead seem more likely outcomes in their context.

Some of the key concepts they examine are *university, learning society, endogenisation, transformation, diversity* and the occluded, problematic Afrikaans word *leerkultur*. [D. Love 1999, especially chapter 2 on *Conceptual Matters*] With reference to *transformation*, for instance, the authors deplore the advancement of technology without cultural reform:

> In essence, the *Discussion Document* proposes to develop twenty-first century technological solutions, but without addressing nineteenth century attitudes towards university institutional and management culture. It is proposed to pull the [University of Stellenbosch] into the new millennium - but only as far as technology goes; there is no question raised of the elitist and 'untransformed' nature of [the University's] institutional culture.

The most telling criterion they apply is that *the university* (if I may read this in a general institutional sense) should encourage diverse cultural thinking rather than assimilate students—and, we may add, staff—into, or compel submission to, a particular tradition: [Love & Malan 1999, *Conclusion*]

> The idea of establishing a culture of learning at the University of Stellenbosch is utterly contradicted by a management that ignores the national context, encourages "tribalism" ... and cracks down on critical thinking. The emphasis is never placed on a culture of learning or creating an academic atmosphere. The fact the student representatives have only recently become members of the various faculty councils - w[h]ere important *academic* matters are discussed - illustrates this. Students are expected to "enjoy" their residence "culture" and stay silent until they graduate and leave the university.

This situated view is precisely crafted to engage in their university's cultural politics. I would like to contrast its orientation with that of another relevant source, though I have not considered it in detail: Lesley Vidovich's [2001] article *That chameleon 'quality':...*. It spans policy documents on higher education in Australia across two decades, but focuses on that one notion, *quality*. It analyses 'multiple and often contradictory discourses' of *excellent standards, quality assurance* and *quality improvement*. To describe *quality* as one 'issue' or 'theme' would miss Vidovich's central proposition. It is that during the period in question, the Commonwealth Government used the discursive rhetoric of *quality* pragmatically to pursue whatever it deemed from time to time to be in the 'national interest'. Behind a rhetoric of 'balancing requirements', the effect was always 'tighter steerage of higher education' and 'more powerful control over universities' in particular. [L. Vidovich 2001, abstract]

For this time-based approach to work, it seems to me vital that the analysis should limit itself to sources that afford broadly similar perspectives from each period to the next. This longitudinal study compared a series of policy documents. In contrast to that, if one compares documents with widely or radically different perspectives—such as the UK policy proposals of the Robbins Report of 1963 and the Dearing report of 1997—their discourses seem too far apart to reveal the slippage or sliding of meaning that Vidovich traces. (However, for a comparative review of Robbins and Dearing, see R. Barnett 1999.)

My final exemplar of rhetorical analysis—toward political change—foregoes any particular texts to critique. It examines the functions of some of the prominent terms that we noted above: *lifelong learning* in a discursive cluster with *Total Quality Management, globalisation* and *an adaptable workforce*, among others. It is Cliff Falk's [1999] essay *Sentencing Learners to Life: Retrofitting the Academy for the Information Age*. Falk situates *the academy* in a global, social scene. In particular on the theme of *lifelong learning*, his essay decodes market-oriented usages of *nationhood* and *selfhood*, *(under)development*, *education*, the *information society* plus the disciplinary roles of *mass education* and *value-added* learning: [emphasis in original; other styling removed]

> Since 1977 *truly lifelong-oriented educational systems - as a tool for developing individuals who will learn throughout life and thus become more valuable to society* have been developed in the nations of the 'west', though these systems invert the utopic systems envisioned in the 1960's. Lifelong learning today is largely a project of economic, social and epistemological recuperation dedicated to delimiting rather than expanding the subjectivities of learners exposed to it ...

and later:

> Like advertising, lifelong learning roots out stable competency and constant identity, for which it substitutes lack and desire (underdevelopment). This harmonises 'education' with the current regime of production/consumption ... Recurrent (re)learning is a necessity if the education system is to continue to produce the *malleable* but *disciplined* consumer/producer/citizen that the information age is built upon.

Falk is writing in a panoptical, critical genre through which the source journal, CTHEORY, taps into a huge range of intellectual (theoretical and scientific) thinking. Its contributors fashion artistic trajectories through the academic disciplines; yet their works are always hybridised since that provides the (proto-)genre with its dynamism: a neo-Futurism.

> Aside: These are free-range intellectuals, swapping 'moving' digital si(gh)tings of *the academy* and *society* in-from-to cyberspace. CTHEORists play in a deadly serious, stylised, anarchic mode of writing. They appear to thrill complicitly to the whiff of danger when examining our institutions and hypocrisies all too keenly for comfort.

Deconstructive readings

Here I shall select a few works that apply and exemplify deconstructive approaches to texts or situations relevant to this dissertation. My first exemplary source for this category is Jacques Derrida's lecture [1984a, given in 1983] *The Principle of Reason: The University in the Eyes of its Pupils*. In my project it served as a foil to the Dearing Report, though for a long time I could not work out why or even what to make of it. On the surface (or on *a* surface among many) it appears to express an appeal for university research to be organised in a rhythm ('blinking' in Derrida's analogy of an animal's steady gaze). [J. Derrida 1984 pp.7-8 and 26-7] The gaze alternates between introspective periods of theorising within the academy and 'hard-eyed' conduct of applied research in the wider world. (OED from 1728 Chambers Cyclopedia: *sclerophthalmic* '... wherein the eye is dry, hard, red, and painful')

As I discovered later, to understand or explain this address—a transcript from an inaugural address at Cornell University in 1983—one has to reconstruct its contexts. The literary context is diverse, elusive and not easy to delimit. In Derrida's first delivery in 1993, and again in Frankfurt that year, we may suppose that he animated it and possibly elucidated the text with asides and snippets of footnotes for the audience. Reading it as an abstract calls for some prior grasp of the thinkers it interprets: mainly Aristotle, Kant and Heidegger. It also helps to know the terrain of its first geographical context. When Derrida employs figures of an 'abyss' and 'barriers' [1984a p.13] this is not only a Kierkegaardian reference to Heidegger's speech in 1933, *Der Satz vom Grund* regarding metaphysical representation and essence. It also enacts a play on the fact that the Cornell University campus is split by, yet bridges, a deep chasm.

For my emergent research project a key part of Derrida's play of ideas, as it turned out, is that of 'fundamental' ('pure') research with 'oriented' ('applied') research in terms of the university's *reason for being* [as he explains its having and-or lacking a *raison d'être*, on pp.1-2]. Derrida articulates this interplay as follows [1984a p.14]:

> You may wonder what is being advocated, in France; in opposition to this concept of oriented research. The answer is basic, "fundamental" research, disinterested research with aims that would not be pledged in advance to some utilitarian purpose. Once upon a time it was possible to believe that pure mathematics, theoretical physics, philosophy (and, within philosophy, especially metaphysics and ontology) were basic disciplines shielded from power, inaccessible to programming by the pressures of the State or, under cover of the State, by civil society or capital interests. The sole concern of such basic research would be knowledge, truth, the disinterested exercise of reason, under the sole authority of the principle of reason.
>
> And yet we know better than ever before what must have been true for all time, that this opposition between the basic and the end-oriented is of real but limited relevance. ...

Derrida's address provided me with a sharp lesson that eventually took root after I had pursued his thinking through various sites of deconstructive practice. I was engaged in a hard-gazed quest for a revelatory text that would explain Derrida's thinking, the university, and-or the world(s) beyond so as to ground reasons for being and action once and for all time. Derrida's address pointed to an endless detour of reading that is also a continual process of re-inscription. Derrida has published or been party to various works that influenced my research project. In a sense, though—apart from his turn toward *justice* as 'the law of the law' by 1991 [B. Belay 1996 pp.125-135, and Morag Patrick 1996 pp.136-152, both in J. Brannigan 1996]—they re-work and elaborate his thinking in the early books that built on his first publication as noted above: [1962] *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry, an Introduction*. Yet he has persisted in doing so in unruly ways that provoke us to make an effort, to think and to learn.

My next exemplary source appears to play safe, yet ventures 'against the grain' of its cultural setting so as to overcome and renew the safeguards that protect us all, especially in the technologised 'West'. A recent research project is called DERIDASC ('Deconstructive Evaluation of Risk In Dependability Arguments and Safety Cases'). The speciality of DERIDASC's author, James Armstrong, is that of safety-critical systems. [J. Armstrong 2002a-c, unpublished, see abstracts; cf. J Armstrong 2003] In the project he examines the reports of safety experts about such systems. You may well ask: "What has that to do with quasi-deconstructive readings of higher educational policy proposals?" The first part of a reply is easy: DERIDASC treats deconstruction as a method or approach—albeit one capable of transforming intentions—that can be applied even or especially to narratives that expect to be taken most seriously: [J. Armstrong 2002a]

> The construction of a safety case is partly a process of rhetorical persuasion; but there are risks in this.

There is no iconoclastic intent about the project, yet it has to incur the risk of undermining the most rational-seeming of arguments so as to safeguard the safety performance of safety reports themselves. Why, though, do I find this relevant to policy proposals? In a strict sense, safety assessments are proposals of policy: *Aircraft of this type are fit to carry passengers*, etc. Conversely, higher educational policy reports in effect convey safety assessments. Their discourse implicitly claims and performs that role, for instance: [in NCIHE 1997 paragraphs 13, 65 and 83]

> The concern now is that short term pressures to reduce costs, in conditions of no growth, may damage the intrinsic quality of the learning experience which underpins the standing of UK awards.
>
> We believe these [technologies] give scope for a reduction in costs.

> We have concluded that institutions should be able to manage a one per cent a year real reduction in funding per student over the next two years; a 6.5 per cent reduction would damage quality.

The DERIDASC project assimilated and deftly applied a deconstructive—and hence highly reflexive—mode of creative reading in a period of months. Since its reports are written for a specialist audience that is professionally sceptical, yet not intended for other theorists, they have a rare clarity and freshness. I commend the project's approach as an accessible exemplar. In my own case that is because a lucid explanation and-or example in a field distinct from to one's own is often conducive to understanding and to application from first principles.

> Aside: If you happen to be a safety engineer, you will make your own professional assessment of my recommendation anyway.

A vital message of DERIDASC is that safety reporting is inherently linguistic and discursive, even as we seek unambiguously to state the most grounded (an expensive situation, that, for aircraft), empirical and irrefutable facts of a situation.

My third source of deconstructive inspiration takes reflexive risks, through experimental self-inscription, with how it will be read. It is Maggie MacLure and Ian Stronach's [1994] essay *Deconstructing the Notion of Policy Hysteria: Five Readings, Some Unprincipled Coupling, and No Happy Endings. Re-draft.*

> Aside: It seems to me that James Armstrong in the DERIDASC reports, Paul Dowling in his dissertation [1993] and most academic writers in general strive—with good reason—to minimise risks of alienating readers.

Whereas the DERIDASC project expounds and promotes deconstructive techniques as a practical resource, MacLure and Stronach's work enacts the telling of five linked stories in the place of policy making. The stories' purport or utility is left up to the reader-as-author, without promises. They range from narrative (*factual*) to radically indeterminate (*aporetic*). In different senses, each story consumes the previous story while it demands more of the reader and so ratchets up the probability of misreading, non-reading or unreadability—thus leaving the previous stories intact. The authors are keenly aware of the risks they incur.

Apart from quoting this snippet from its abstract:

> ... vocationalist discourse is made irrational by a whole series of shifts and displacements in meaning and activity, amounting to a condition of "policy hysteria."

I shall stop trying to describe the essay and leave it for you to enjoy, reject, ignore or respond to as you will.

> Aside: Resolved—I shall put Ronald Barnett here for lack of a more suitable compartment for his *œuvre* in this bestiary of daring works.

Ronald Barnett's prolific writing and editing in the late 1980s and early 1990s moved from quite empirical studies, through increasingly theorised works, to a neologism ('supercomplexity') in the title of a book Realizing the University... [2000]. It marks his fixture by stereotyping, even as I now perform it, as 'Ronald

Barnett who wrote about *supercomplexity*'. The book ends (to inaugurate an era) thus:

> In the mediaeval beginning of the university were text and spoken word: outcome and process went together. An age of supercomplexity compels that that twin set of activities be reinterpreted and reinvigorated. Amid supercomplexity, the university has the dual responsibility not only of compounding uncertainty but also of helping us to live with uncertainty; even to revel in it. This is the task in front of the university. In a world where everything is uncertain, there is no other task.

Can he be serious? Very. In a sociological sense, he illuminates social, cultural and economic trends. In a prophetic role, he spells out what will become (of) us, unless or anyway. But what of deconstruction—does he say it, or do it (if we can say 'it', etc. [cf. J. Derrida 1984a p.27])? I regard him as an outright practitioner of deconstruction, whose role description may be parsed as: *de-*(outright)*constructionist*. He occupies the ruins of the old university, sorts the materials, and sets a rebuilding programme in train. He articulates that programme in terms of *responsibility* and *foundation* at the outset of Realizing the University [pp.2-3]. However for Barnett the Derridean, preparatory phase of shaking the old foundations is a sombre affair that ends in silence.

I (though now overtaken by your animation of the persona of this dissertation) vehemently disagree. Of course, I am referring to 'Barnett', a textual persona or being that traces a trajectory through 'his' texts. Whether the author Ronald Barnett at various times chose, needed or happened to read Derrida's work in this way is an empirical matter. As I see it, in ...Supercomplexity he fulfils a joyous, exuberant task that precisely inherits and succeeds the vigour of the transient age of deconstruction by a name. With and by forgetting, that is to exclaim, in a mood of *anamnesis* (remembrance): may we never forget to forget, in joyous rejoinder.

Barnett's later work has a more sombre tone, and ends with a call for cheerfulness for making a start. [2003 p.180] The movement from deconstruction to supercomplexity is summed up, though, in mid-flow by ...Supercomplexity as follows: [2000 p.79, emphasis in original]

> Derrida [In *Mochlos*... in R. Rand 1992] considered that it makes sense for us still to talk of the university and 'responsibility' in the same breadth. *[sic]* He did not, however, furnish us with any clear idea as to the nature of that responsibility [of generating supercomplexity]. I believe that, in this educational task of enabling us to live with supercomplexity, we have found it: this is the new responsibility of the university.
>
> It is a brave new world: the university is active in generating its richness, its complexity, and its rate of conceptual *and* technological change. But it is also a brave new world in that it produces phenomenological disturbance calling for lifelong meta-qualities of fortitude, resilience and courage. The responsibility for developing these qualities must fall upon the university.

A mere slip of a letter—*breadth* for *breath* in the 2nd line above—animates (inspires, breathes life into) and *de*-limits *the university* as a being that is co-extensive with a generative responsibility. *The university* will not be limited to *the academy* but must transpose (unsettle/re-settle) society and culture(s) at large.

Imaginative connotations

Aside: Coming after and-or for (before) the images, the rhetorical and the (post-)aporetic works we have... what, exactly? *Nothing* would be a stylish start, yet over-played in the closure of eternal return. Perhaps: *collage* for the images, *multivocity* for the rhetoric, *profusion* for the aporetic (im)mobility? What *comes after* all that, so as to discover it? Creatively, what might it bring up? It is far too soon to say, but that has not stopped anything from being said. Here I suggest that what inaugurates that *to-come* is manifold: *the imaginary* (A.S. Reber 1985: *imagination*, qualified as anticipative, reproductive, creative etc.).

The university is too narrow: it punctually marks the limits of its social responsibility. *Show your identity card.* Equal opportunities? *Here are the procedures.* Who to employ? *Check the certificates.* Right to appeal? *By due process.* Funding? *Fill in the forms, here are the deadlines.* And so on, right up to the boundaries. The academy has arguably, though without argument, become too bureaucratic and *boring*. What happened to *spirit*—inspiration, ferment, controversy, activism and fun? *Sorry, too late, almost all forgotten now, try Media and Cultural Studies—or whatever—over there on the far side.* What happened to the great cultural divide, the one for which the university was responsible, sociologically to divide interesting (intellectual) work from boring (mechanical) labour? *The divide is in place, deeper than ever, with 24-hour automated excavators at work; and the felt-clothed body of the university is shuffling and sliding into it.*

Yet there could be a price to pay for resistance to slipping further; most probably more of the same: [Leonard Cohen 1986/1988, emphasis added for modulation]

> They sentenced me to twenty years of boredom
> For trying to change the system from within
> I'm coming now, I'm coming to reward them
> First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin.
>
> *Chorus:*
> I'd really like to live beside you, baby
> I love your body and your spirit and your clothes
> But you see that line there moving through the station?
> I told you, I told you, told you, **I was one of those**

Never mind all that. Gregory Ulmer's book Applied Grammatology: Post(e)-Pedagogy... [1985] is about works of Jacques Derrida and Joseph Beuys and much between and besides them. It is experimental, about the senses and the sensual; it fixates and juxtaposes figures and images. Take a section on EXAMPLE, for example. [pp.110-103; references in source] It opens with the concept, only to recoil from the concept of "the concept of the concept" (as lacking discursive sense; he is citing Stanley Rosen). That brings us by way of Victoria Kahn to an etymology of 'essay'—to taste the king's *[sic]* food—and Montaigne's crafty resistance to translation. Derrida, or Derrida-Lacan-Poe's tale of *The Purloined Letter* takes us to ideography rather than pictorial models, *framing* and *mise en scène* of narrative and the psychological principle of truth through fiction. The doubling role of the frame, framing the exhibit even while showing it(self) off, defeats conceptual closure. Likewise, the narrator's identification with the tale prevents their signature and naming of it. Thus:

> The problematic of the narrator in literature ... applies equally to the author-narrator in academic discourse, making the frame and the signature the same question.

> Aside, for respite: Tell me about it, then I can bind this and finish. Or please do not, since in your view I am part of the tale and that will supplement 'my' tale, then neither of us will be able to finish. This dissertation is doubling my vision already. (To be resumed in chapter 7, *Disseminations*, with Joseph Beuys's Action and Ute Klophaus's photograph of it *How to explain pictures to a dead hare*. [1965, and G.L. Ulmer 1988—frontispiece])

My final stepping-stone in this review is Simon Morgan Wortham's essay *Van Gogh's Shoes, Or, Does The University Have Two Left Feet?* [1999, citations adjusted], which introduces itself with a conundrum:

> My purpose in taking this detour through several texts, ranging across a number of critical and theoretical perspectives, is to argue that the fundamental problem of Van Gogh's painting - whether the shoes are a 'proper' pair or whether they are not a pair at all, paradoxically because they may be the same (two left feet, as it were) - is one that can help us negotiate a number of debates within, and concerning, the modern university.

Walking on Two Feet

> In his influential essay 'Mochlos' Jacques Derrida suggests that, just as the founding of the law is not a simply judicial question, one either of legality or illegality, so the founding of the university cannot merely be treated as a 'university event' [J. Derrida 1980 in R. Rand 1992/1987]. Rather the founding of the university opens onto and is received from an otherness that everywhere permeates it. Thus the idea of the university as a unified institution with coherently defined characteristics and borders based on ideals of reason founders on its own foundations, and the university is beset by a conflict which 'is interminable and therefore insoluble' [J. Derrida 1980 p.28: as a conflict that Kant is 'obliged to recognize'].

You may have noticed that 'I', your narrator, have-has not offered much explanatory guidance during the last few steps. Paradoxically, this is an attempt to be more helpful, by not getting between you and some vital resources on which I have called—or to whose calls I have responded—in the course of this research. As Paul Dowling [1993] notes several times, he found no direct precedents for his research so he had to position it in relation to works of varying relevance. For my as-yet-unformed project, there were innumerable, or perhaps no, exemplars. As previously mentioned, only in the late stages did closely relevant works appear. Some were only published then; or (more often) only then could I rank my potential sources by degrees of relevance to my emerging project. Had it turned out otherwise, this would been less of an exploratory exercise than a tour of charted terrain.

On balance I think that at the outset, there was a wide gap between theoretical works and practical applications. We (whoever of us were attempting to inscribe that gap) had a lot of imaginative stretching to do, prototypes to devise and precedents to genealogise. There is nothing heroic about this, though there is anxiety and excitement by turns. It is part of the internal necessity of the academy to keep researching regardless of demand or application, even if some of that has to be stimulated or invented as a condition of support for a project.

My main concern about this scene of a sublime quest is that it promotes *the university* and *the academy* at the expense of the colleges of further education

whose staff provide and promote courses of *higher education*—if one must use that divisive term. (For further ethical concerns, see the *Sensitivities* section of the next chapter.)

4 Intellectual Approach

Technique and text

In this chapter, I shall describe the techniques with which I experiment in the four substantive chapters, 5 to 8. These techniques are all about 'language' in various ways, or more precisely about its relations to 'texts'. Here the meaning of a text is treated as (almost always, to some extent) arbitrary, problematical and contextually dependent. The qualification of 'to some extent' is a vital precaution against a relativist attitude of 'anything goes'; it entails a notion of 'play' (extent of movement) across a range of more-or-less plausible or arguable interpretations. A reading of a text takes place in a context that is not identical to that in which it was written or previously read. Even an immediate re-reading by the same person is influenced by the way their previous reading re-marked the text in advance. The meaning of a text involves consulting other texts, and so on. Jacques Derrida indicates that, and more, by the (in)famous and widely misunderstood aphorism that "There is no extra-text". Barbara Johnson cautions us that life is like a text: [in her *Translator's Introduction* to Jacques Derrida's *The Double Session II* in Dissemination 1981 pp.xiv-xvi, emphasis in original]

> ... Far from being a simple warning against the biographical or referential fallacy, *il n'y a pas de hors-texte* is a statement derived from [Jean-Jacques] Rousseau's autobiography itself. For what Rousseau's text tells us is that our very relation to "reality" already functions like a text. Rousseau's account of his life is not only itself a text, but it is a text that speaks only about the textuality of life. Rousseau's life does not *become* a text through his writing: it always already *was* one. Nothing, indeed, can be said to be not a text.

Rodolphe Gasché expresses this principle of textuality as follows: [1986 p.281]

> "There is no extra-text" means just this: nothing outside the text can, like a last reason, assume a *fulfilling function (Erfüllungsfunktion)* of the textual referrals. It certainly does not permit the conclusion that there is nothing else but texts, or for that matter, that all is language.
>
> ... As the textual structure of the re-mark demonstrates, for structural reasons the text has no identity or self with which to coincide. Though the text necessarily refers to itself, this movement never comes to completion. In addition, all self-referral, as shown in [J. Derrida's 1981] 'The Double Session,' is grafted on a structurally endless referral to other determinate texts, thus making all textual self-reflexivity *ultimately* impossible.

Here the usage of 'text' does not require a written script; a picture or a performance may serve as well. It has to do with the imposition of meaning onto, or its interpretation from, whatever is available to the senses. Usually artificial and visual works are chosen as sample texts, whether the objects concerned were designed or arranged to convey particular meaning (encoding) or not. In this dissertation, as previously introduced, the sample of text happens to be a large fragment of a written work, the policy proposal known as the Dearing Report [NCIHE 1997]. I apply a chosen set of techniques to it. That is the conventional way of presenting the situation in a research paper.

Alternatively: I choose a more-or-less important or arbitrary sample of writing that I apply to each of a variety of techniques so as to observe their behaviour in response to it. That way round, the techniques—though usually closely defined in terms of performance—are viewed as texts that we can query, experiment upon and hybridise to produce other (though not necessarily new) methods or applications. Then the fixed sample becomes methodical; it provides a constant, delimiting frame of play through which to observe the unruly techniques.

I have arranged the chapters in an order that goes from mechanical praxis in chapter 5 *Deconstructions*—though even it includes aleatory (chance-based) elements—through chapter 6 *Implications* to creative connotations in chapter 7 *Disseminations*. Chapter 8 *Re-membering...* tries to blend the techniques in equal measure but is forced to strike a compromise in favour of narrative coherence.

The oscillation (swapping both ways) between object of study and technique can seem unsettling at first, yet it is not undisciplined. The discipline I exercise in relating this research has to be appropriate to this context yet it is at least as necessary as in a more orthodox perspective. It has to make explicit that which is at all unconventional, keep the differences to a necessary minimum and observe the normal guidelines wherever possible in its situation. The result can sometimes seem provocative or laughable in a dissertation, in ways that might pass without comment in a book, article, programme or talk in a suitable context. That has to do with being on probation, with risks having to be calculated and justified, and with the suspicion of special pleading to cover lazy performance or lack of ability. For instance, here is one rule: each experimental text (since chapters 5 to 8 are as textual as their shared sample and their diverse techniques) must show what it does, once, without re-processing. It must deliver the printed equivalent of a virtuoso, live performance. The experiment must be reported as it actually happened. That condition is an empirical discipline of this mode of research.

Why? My hope is that it conveys a certain freshness or openness, call it what you will, to you the reader. It should reveal the flaws and pitfalls, unrealised potentials or whatever may transpire in a reading, not a showcase of something fully worked out in advance. That aleatory sort of ideal is no excuse for lack of presentation by way of arrangement, editing and proofing. It is my responsibility, as the writer, to remove flaws of expression by those means. Indeed, the slightest mistake in spelling or styling can be especially distracting in a passage that demands close and tiring attention from the reader as it manipulates excerpts from other texts. Here I shall point out the conventions I have applied in the substantive chapters and I shall include occasional reminders of them in the introductions and in the more awkward passages of those chapters.

Summary of techniques

Each chapter takes the sample of the Dearing Inquiry's Summary Report [NCIHE 1997] and seeks to explore its range of potential meanings almost as if for the first time. The chapters do not build much on each other's findings, nor do they work toward a revelatory synthesis. That discipline of ordered incoherence is treated as natural and appropriate, just as a set of exhibits in a gallery may not form a series or be summed up in a particular way. It is a deliberate act of forgetting both in order to attend directly to the object of study on each occasion and to keep the techniques apart. That is so until chapter 8 *Re-membering...*,

which I am ignoring for the time being since it is most readily explained in terms of the earlier chapters. In a nutshell, the techniques employed are as follows:

Table 4 - Techniques employed

Chapter		Technique	Affinities
5	*Deconstructions*	'Recordance': analysis of the frequency and proximity of words and phrases, plus synthesis. (In a broader sense, 'recordance' is applied in chapters 5-8.)	Literary concordance, exegesis
6	*Implications*	'Spieling': Reveries on philosophical themes.	Philosophising, analysing
7	*Disseminations*	'Departures': fixating upon mimetic omens in an artwork for reading the sample text askance.	Mimetics, story-telling

A general note of caution is needed at this point. Another convention of this dissertation is that the techniques borrowed or mimicked from academic disciplines should be applied in a strictly amateur manner. Here 'amateur' conveys enthusiasm, not disrespect; it does not mean 'slipshod'. However the techniques as they are employed here should certainly not be treated as exemplars of state-of-the-art, expert *praxis* in each field. This is a case of prospecting across academic boundaries: particularly the somewhat—or perhaps radically—arbitrary boundaries among and within the social sciences and humanities.

I urge anyone who considers applying such approaches and tools in their own practice to acquire them at source, not by copying my caricatures. It would be a mistake in my view to assess my worked examples in comparison with professional exegesis etc.; and worse still to treat them as representing current practice in their respective fields. If I appear to construe scholars as practitioners of techniques and tools, what I am really pointing out is that I cannot bring the nuanced expertise of a specialist to bear on any of my explorations.

Linguistic recordance: chapter 5, *Deconstructions*

To outline what goes on in chapter 5, *Disseminations*, I have resurrected the old word *recordance* (OED: remembrance, the faculty of remembering, recollection, a commemorative account; *recordant* containing a record, reminiscent; *cf. anamnesis*). It is the act of recollection, of (un)picking and reassembly, that I wish to invoke here. The chapter aspires to, but does not merit, the title *Deconstructions*; yet to be categorical about that would be out of keeping with deconstructive practices. Strictly speaking, *deconstruction* is something that happens: a text *deconstructs (itself)* but ordinarily we have no 'middle voice' by which to say that in English.

Chapter 5, *Deconstructions*, applies to the sample text the following process of reassembly through concordance (locating word-instances), analysis of collocation (proximities) and synthesis (composing new patterns):

Table 5 - A process of recordance

1. Take a contiguous fragment of text that presents itself as a logical unit. Usually this is a section or a group of related paragraphs.
2. Count up the instances of words in the fragment to locate those that occur most frequently. Strictly this applies to word roots or 'headwords' to allow for variants, but avoids homonyms (different words with similar spellings).
3. Analyse the proximity of words to find patterns of pairs, triplets etc. that tend most often to occur together. Usually they will be the frequent words from the previous step, and tend to occur in phrases; yet one needs to look out for groups of infrequent words that could make up a habitual pattern.
4. Now for the mystical step: string together the words in each prominent pattern. Shuffle them around to conjure up more-or-less plausible 'sayings'.
5. Reconsider the analyses and word-strands for effects of 'mood' that may inflect the manner of 'reading'.

That mode of reading by associative word-frequencies sets aside the convention of linear, start-to-finish reading through grammatical structures. It begs a lot of questions; we can treat those as experimental options rather than seek definite or optimal answers. In step 3, the proximity of words can be physical—within so-many words—or logical, within grammatical sentences or clauses. I tried both, and they each worked, but I did not identify any distinctive behaviours between them. This is not about analysis of logical content; for instance a double negative conveys only negative connotation. In the review at step 5, one may for instance pick out emergent themes of negativity (*not, neither* etc.) in or as a pattern, or sign of doubt or optimism. That may inflect the synthetic 'reading' that composes the fictive strings or 'sayings'. The whole process seeks to conjure glimpses of fragmentary, fictive 'realities', without proving any proposition to be the case empirically, constructively or intentionally. That is so even though it clearly involves empirical, constructive and intentional elements.

We can easily challenge this process, especially in steps 4 and 5. Yet if we dismiss the ways in which the extracted words may settle into a new order of 'meaning', it becomes hard to defend the analysis of habitual word-patterns in steps 2 and 3, and we must in principle—yet unreasonably, in my view—abandon or replace the whole process. If we interrogate the process with 'Are these things True?' there is no reply. Let us rather ask: 'For what may an approach of this sort be useful, stimulating or otherwise interesting?' I do not wish to appear defensive here, since that might imply definite, general claims for the approach. I am only trying to explain what I did to achieve the effects in Chapter 5, for whatever they may be worth in some exemplary way for specific contexts.

Philosophical reveries: chapter 6, *Implications*

Philosophically speaking, the Vision of Dearing [NCIHE 1997] seems utterly consistent in providing a pragmatic view of its context. There are sincere and sometimes passionate appeals to higher ideals, for instance *aims*, *principles* and *sakes* (as invoked by 'for its/their own sake' in paragraphs 8 and 23). These expressions uplift us instrumentally, seeking to make an impression and to persuade us (whichever 'us' is in the place of its address) of the rightness of its proposals. *Purposes*, *programmes* and *strategic aims* are at home in the Vision's businesslike discourse. *Values* too put us in the marketplace for goods and services, for dealing and trade-offs.

However I wish to suggest that the Dearing Committee was *pragmatic for a purpose* that exceeded either its overt Terms of Reference or the political detour on which it was sent to bypass the time of a general election. It mulled over its own ends and resources to see what it could accomplish within the rules. It surmounted blatant contradictions in its remit. It yearned for social justice, or at least a progressive programme of reform toward that ideal; perhaps that zeal caused it to over-reach itself. On one foot, so to speak, it wore the stout boot of the faithful servant that never overstepped the mark. On the other it sported the winged slipper of Victory over Oppression.

So far, we have touched several philosophical strands in the conduct of the Dearing Inquiry. There is a classical *Tradition* of the given, that which is entrusted to our care. *Enlightenment* comes by way of excessive inquiries, including self-scrutiny. A *Modern* forgetfulness loses or diffuses itself (with hubris, yet no laughter). It does so both in imposing (dis)order and in juxtaposing incompatible outcomes in a single work of art. The chapter thus attends to some prominent strands in the fabric of the sample text. It traces the Ideas of the Vision through its Truths of higher education: *religious truth, the Truth of reason, poetry in motion* and *the Truth of politics*.

> Aside, a stylistic note: The initial capital letters (on *Truth* etc. here and in chapter 5) are a mark of respect for a proper name, personalised ideal or sacrosanct object. One could apply such capitals to *social justice* and to *reason*, as is often done, yet those are inherently more secular concepts.

Plying and *applying* are integral notions here. The sections of the chapter are not explorations of the text so much as acts of re-packaging. Each act of 'implication' reads the sample text in a distinct, metaphysical manner. The section on *An Idea of religious truth* conjures a metaphysics of higher education whereby the Vision mimics or inaugurates an organised, secular religion, albeit with devotional niches for particular traditions of faith. *An Idea of the Truth of reason* imagines the university of reason on high, encompassing the world in a steadfast gaze or with the many 'gazes' of its sensory faculties. *Poetry in motion, where words take root: on the many truths of Dearing* applies a theorist's (Michel Leiris's) view of the poetic vision to the sample text, especially to its promise of rewards for our acting in particular ways in the world. The final reverie, *The Truth of politics and the politics of Truth in the Dearing manifesto* analyses the language of the Vision text so as to position it—at various points, for diverse issues—on a party-political spectrum. The chapter ushers us through a short, self-effacing passage to...

The Mimetic Action: chapter 7, *Implications*

Chapter 7, *Implications* performs a mimetic exercise. It becomes attached to a particular photograph by Ute Klophaus [1965]. That shows the scene of a performative 'happening' or 'Action' (Words. German: *Aktion* an action, drive or campaign) by the artist-academic, etc., Joseph Beuys. With various excursions along the passages of an obsessive introduction, the chapter arrives at the start of the Vision of Dearing. Without taking its fixated gaze off the photograph of the scene of Beuys's Action, it deploys a kind of peripheral, associative vision to 'read off' the sections of the Dearing text in terms of the Beuysian image. Or: more-or-less in terms of the image. More *and* less in terms of the Vision as examined in the previous chapters; since it adds sections from the Summary Report and omits

others, for stated reasons. It ends abruptly by harking back to its opening topic of a reflexive 'middle voice' and the rhythms of passage along the way.

Overtaken by reprise: chapter 8, *Re-membering...*

The final substantive chapter, *Re-membering: in the Place of the Address*, tries and fails to apply a balanced selection of the techniques used in the previous chapters (word/phrase analysis, philosophical reverie and parallel commentary from an artwork). In practice it falls into a routine that mainly relies on the linguistic approach, yet occasionally resorts to the others. A vital component of its working and of the earlier substantive chapters is a tracing technique that it is high time to acknowledge: *etymology*, knowledge of the true origins of words.

Etymology, speaking for the ancestors to come

> (OHD) *etymology* (account of) a word's origin and sense-development; branch of linguistic science concerned with this; *etymon* primary word from which another is derived; (Liddell) *etumos* true, real, actual, ...

The principle on which this relies is that there is no discrete language, as such, only patterned utterances that come to life and evolve through us as we continually re-learn to use them. As speakers communicate, the supposed 'language' shifts imperceptibly in form and meaning; indeed form and meaning are not separable in this cultural process. Human languages—even the most artificial—result from previous languages in complex yet often traceable ways. The traces of previous ways of speaking inhabit and inflect whatever we say in a version or dialect of 'English' or of any other 'language'. Here *language* is a dynamic process, not a static object.

This dissertation frequently takes advantage of that view. It often relies on 'unpacking' the former meanings of a word or phrase in order to unsettle the culturally apparent meaning of instances of it in the text in question. The procedure of attention to words is simple enough: pick a fragment of text; for each a word or phrase, look up its contemporary usages and linguistic derivation(s), then re-read the fragment in terms of the potential meanings thus brought to light. Coincidences and contrasts can suggest 'themes' of alternative meaning. These may run with, irrespective of or counter to an overt meaning, the one we would tend to treat as the intention of the person or group who uttered the piece. At least, the process may stimulate us to think differently about what a passage or message is 'trying to say' (in a textual sense of *vouloir dire*, rather than *fair comprendre* to convey, toward the Habermasian ideal of transparent communication).

We can and should raise many objections to the apparent assumptions at work here. A popular gambit would be to pick on this proponent's own utterance, such as the bit above on 'trying to say ... *vouloir dire*' above. I appear to be claiming to point out a radical uncertainty of interpretation of (almost) any utterance, yet I make remarks that presuppose discrete human languages (English and French) with equivalencies and contrasts within and between them. That looks like trying to have it both ways. Guilty as charged, I must declare, with a plea of habitual *synchrony*; we most easily think we understand what was just

said. Then there is the matter of *diachrony*: the 'same' expression being uttered at different times. The awkward fact on which I so tenuously rely here is that interpretation can only follow an utterance. We like to think that what we say or write means what we intended it to before we uttered it. In practice that is a matter for the hearer or reader, in place of the writer or speaker. We may even fail to grasp the significance of what we previously recorded for ourselves—notes for a dissertation for instance—but that need not stop us *making sense* of it. (This play of time and interpretation is captured by the title of Raymond Williams's book of essays from 1957-1985: What I Came To Say [1990].)

Throughout this dissertation I take diachronic liberties with languages, as if all previous meanings haunt or inhabit an utterance; on which more below. However I apply some strict rules about avoiding false etymologies, mis-reading of homonyms and doubtful provenances. Many risks remain, since well-researched etymologies turn out to contain instances of circumstantial evidence, missing links and so forth. The point, though, is that the lexicons have been subjected to thoughtful examination by specialists to trace the evolution of usages and nuances, and to locate the doubtful items in the linguistic structure.

Perhaps the most questionable thing that I do is to subvert the chronology—granted that meanings and usages can oscillate over centuries—to forego the practice of evaluating a text either in a contemporary manner or historically in its (reconstructed, fictive) cultural context. I place the ancestral inheritance of potential meanings in the future of a sample text, so as to mediate between it and us. In effect I invite a diffuse assembly of forebears, in a literary rather than genetic sense, to say what they would make of a fragment of text. Of course, to do the job properly, we should consult particular 'ancestors' or surrogates to speak for the whole assembly (such as the late Raymond Williams or the extant Roger Scruton) to sort out the proper interpretation(s) for the time and place of a particular text ('presencing'). We may qualify that claim with: '... if its provenance is available'. For a discursive fragment, the document that contains it only marks the start of the genealogical trails that we may be able to project into earlier time. Even cultural historians would not remove the plural '(s)' of interpretation(s) above, since they are well equipped to multiply as well as filter the range of semantic potentials for a given cultural context.

Theoretical resources

In this section I shall try to exceed the criterion of immediate relevance to the dissertation, without releasing a torrent of sources, by focusing on a few examples and offering some guidance on finding more. The emphasis is on using such resources now rather than on how I went about doing so. Of course the current scene will rapidly be overtaken by events.

As recently as the 1990s, there was a scarcity of accessible sources on the cluster of theory and practice around post-structuralism, post-modernism and deconstruction. Then as essays and books of helpful commentary were published and programmes broadcast, a huge amount of explanatory and some illustrative material became available on the World Wide Web. Some of the web-based material is superb, fully up to peer-reviewed quality. Some more is the product of sincere ignorance or misunderstanding; yet even those sources contribute to debates and are not to be dismissed lightly. The main cause of misunderstanding, in my view, is that of abstraction: trying to grasp and apply bits of theory without the canonical slog of prior reading. That essential journey (so to speak, although

there are infinitely many) is restrictive in two ways: it reduces one's time and energy for other activities and it defines the limits of understanding according to what one has gleaned. My mistake was to look for theories and techniques as if they were free-standing tools, independent of prior understanding. It took some heavy reading to work my way out of that impasse; yet many vital clues popped up in unlikely sources such as abstracts, caricatures, quips and online discussions.

> Aside: There is supposed to have been a discrete 'linguistic turn' in continental Europe in the 1960s, in North America in the 1970s and becoming manifest—or always, already passé—in Britain. The prior reading of any subject prefixed with 'post-' includes that to which the second part of the term refers, e.g. *modernism* and *structuralism*. 'The' theories co-exist in practice rather than supersede each other.

In the table below, I have listed a few books on topics from *discourse* to *deconstruction*, with brief notes as to orientation or relevance in this context. I start with introductory works of general application, and leave till last the academy's public agonising or private grief over its role (if any) in the world (which world(s)?).

Table 6 - Sources: from discourse to deconstruction

Topic	Reference	Comment
discourse analysis	Sara Mills (1997)	Applied to ideologies, then perspectives: feminist, (post-)colonial, linguistics & psychology.
literary theory	Selden & Widdowson (1993)	As for Mills; plus New Criticism, Formalism, Marxist and structuralist theories.
critical theory	Nick Peim (1993)	For teaching of English; especially chapter 4: *Grammatology for Beginners*.
reflective teaching	Stuart Parker (1997)	A handbook of emancipative practices: anti-foundational manœuvres.
history since 1968	Anthony Easthope (1991)	British post-structuralism in relation to Marxism and the theory of the subject.
Derrida and writing	Christopher Johnson (1997)	In relation to Claude Lévi-Strauss: problematising writing.
Derrida and philosophy	David Wood (editor, 1992)	Complementarity, doubling effects, the metaphysics of presence, etc.
textuality	Julian Wolfreys (1998)	Argues against treating deconstruction as a tool for literary interpretation.
deconstruction in practice	Christina Howells (1999)	Analyses the functions of key terms in Derrida's theories.
credentials of deconstruction	Barbara Johnson (1994)	Examines deconstruction's credentials in relation to Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man.
language of deconstruction	Marian Hobson (1998)	Examines the language of Derrida's philosophising.
applying deconstruction	John Brannigan *et al.* (1996)	Applied to: literature and philosophy, justice and the law, politics and technology.
deconstruction as such	Christopher Norris (1987)	Defends Derrida as a rigorous thinker; inspirations and responses among critical thinkers.

post-colonialism	Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1993)	Multi-cultural thinking and practices against anthropological traditions.
literary studies	Peggy Kamuf (1997)	A critique of the practice of confining unsettling implications to historical settings; with a lyrical *Epilogue*.
literary studies	Samuel Weber (1987)	On unstable autonomies in the continually self-interpreting institution of literary studies.
humanities	Simon (Morgan) Wortham (1999)	A lively tour of contested fronts in the cultural politics of *the university*.

These are all commentaries: they declare their sources, quote texts and offer interpretations. When we look to the sources, those too are mainly commentaries. Derrida for instance habitually thinks in a mode of dissemination so his published and spoken texts cite sources in relation to other sources, and so on.

His edited interviews, though, are well channelled, under protest, since he needs and appreciates the discipline of time. [e.g. generally in Positions, 1981] Rather than try to repeat all that he has said and written in his academic career to date, Derrida injects reminders and allusions that presuppose that members of the audience are familiar with his own works and those of a host of other thinkers. I suggest using an annotated bibliography [such as that in pp.206-210 of J. Wolfreys 1998] and having a relevant glossary to hand [e.g. Lentricchia & McLaughlin 1995] as one reads or listens to a transcript of an interview.

So far I have avoided the 'full-strength' academic works of Derrida and associates such as Rodolphe Gasché, since none are essential for reading this dissertation. All the same, it would be a disservice to put anyone off from reading them, especially since they span many genres of writing and subject-matter. Partly because I enjoy its coloured photographs and short essays, I recommend the omnibus volume on Deconstruction by Andreas Papadakis *et al.* [editors, 1989]. It includes pieces by many (co-)writers whom I have not mentioned above, such as Valerio Adami, Geoffrey Bennington, Charles Jencks and Bernard Tschumi. Before this paragraph closes, I must commend Rodolphe Gasché's The Tain of the Mirror [1986] for its patient explanations and Daniel Cottom's Abyss of Reason:... [1991] for its quotations and plates. Then there's Immanuel Kant's The Conflict of the Faculties [1979/1798] and H. Lawson-Tancred's introduction to Aristotle's The Metaphysics [1998; glossary on pp. lv-lvii] and ... *[stet]*

Derrida's three early books (published in 1967 and later translated as Speech and Phenomena..., Of Grammatology and Writing and Difference) set out his thinking at that time. Later works that also serve as landmarks are his paper *Mochlos; or, The Conflict of the Faculties* [in R. Rand, editor, 1992], Glas [1990, from 1974; using parallel texts] and John P. Leavey's response, with a foreword by Derrida and an essay by Gregory L. Ulmer, in Glassary [1986]. These are all seriously playful, allusive and disseminative; they invite and require some prior reading of the texts to which they creatively respond. There are so many more essays, papers and articles available that I shall only refer to the most relevant elsewhere in the dissertation.

As to online sources, they are so numerous that there are web sites just to index them; other sites have collections of essays about, and by, relevant writers. One such site is Peter Krapp's The Hydra: a map of theory [1999] that includes a search tool and, for instance, Geoffrey Bennington's page in it, *Expositioning hypertextuality: Derridabase* on an imaginary 'textual machine' for access to all of

Derrida's texts. Voice of the Shuttle is one level beyond, in that it provides a huge index of such literary-theoretical-philosophical sites as Peter Krapp's. One relevant omission at the time of writing is that it does not provide a link to Bob Osborn's Futurism and the Futurists site [Bob Osborn, undated].

The previous paragraph has provided no more than a glimpse of relevant kinds and examples of resources that are available if one has access to the Internet. In some cases, they provide links to full-text versions of published material and-or (as in Bob Osborn's site) links to full-screen versions of artworks.

Precedents

In this section, I cite a few examples of techniques and tools that resemble those I have adopted, adapted and-or applied in the substantive chapters, 5-8 inclusive. Some examples—those of Ian Budge *et al.*, Samuel Weber and David Watson—are from sources with which I am familiar. I have either applied them directly (Ian Budge *et al.*) or they closely resemble the techniques I have used. The rest also appear similar to techniques I have used, though I am not familiar with them. I have included the latter to show that my analytical and synthetic approaches are not as outlandish as they might seem, let alone original.

> Aside: There is no suggestion of endorsement in either direction. I cannot vouch for the particular tools and techniques, though I respect their sources. Conversely, the act of invoking them here does not legitimise my particular practices. Where software tools are involved, they may not be usable in particular situations or even available at all.

Creative manipulation of words and phrases

My first exemplar involves creative use of etymology. I could cite various sources, but one by Samuel Weber is in my view adroitly executed. [1987, pp.87-91] He follows the strands of an etymology of the French term *chez* (*casa, casenier-casana-khazina, casemate—casa matta, case, caser, casier, casino*). A few pages later, [p.100] he weaves the strands into a gem of a tale with which to let go of his essay, ending with this flourish:

> This, then, is the story, my story, of reading and writing — *chez* Derrida. Feel free to do with it what you like. It's nobody's business but yours.

The next item I shall cite is a random sentence generator. [Jan Grant, undated: summary] It sounds not unlike my manual process for composing more-or-less plausible 'sayings' from the word-patterns that I generate from the sample text, in chapter 5, *Deconstructions*:

> Javascript functions call each other to assemble words and short phrases into strings of complex but sometimes dubious grammaticality.

The Alternate Reality Kit was developed by Randall B. Smith at Sun Microsystems Laboratories. [R. B. Smith, undated] Designed for physics students, it provides a programming environment for generating a virtual world that systematically breaks the laws of physics as required. The feature of relevance

here is the creative and instructive process of generating counter-factual specifications. The 'worlds' generated from the Alternate Reality Kit are both internally consistent and malleable. In contrast, my syntheses are opportunistic and instantaneous. They seize upon any resemblances or coincidences they can piece together and conjure conflicting themes out of blatantly inconsistent results as if those afforded glimpses of fragmentary realities in an incoherent, Modernistic scene.

Ideology in manifestos

The New British Politics by Ian Budge *et al.* is the source of the methods that I applied in chapter 6, *Implications* (in the section *The Truth of Politics...*) to analyse the appearance of party political biases in my sample text, the Dearing Vision. Strictly this is a mis-use of the technique, since the Dearing Inquiry's report is not supposed to be a political manifesto. Anyway, it is a prospectus of sorts and highly rhetorical in parts, so I treat it as a manifesto to see what transpires. The technique that Budge *et al* demonstrate compares manifestos according to the proportion of sentences that mention a campaign issue. In my application, it appears to provide a clear profile of the Dearing Vision's political leanings.

Deconstruction in practice

In the previous chapter, the section on *Deconstructive readings* described James Armstrong's DERIDASC project at the University of Newcastle as an example of a deconstructive approach. Another reported instance is the study by Roger Slee and Julie Allan. It examines a policy document, the UK Quality Assurance Agency's Code of Practice on Disability in Higher Education in response to the Dearing Committee's report and the Garrick report by its Scottish Committee. Their article shows deconstructively how texts 'get into trouble, come unstuck, offer to contradict themselves'. [Slee & Allan 2001, abstract]

Spontaneous dissemination

When we are engaged in a discursive exercise, we are not usually inclined to turn onto it an obsessive gaze that could excite linguistic potentials to arrive at a semantic determination. David Watson provides an exception. He was a member of the Dearing Inquiry's National Committee and of various initiatives that followed it. In a lengthy paper, *Decoding Dearing on Diversity* [1999], Watson picks on a fairly common figure of speech, *diversity*, and examines its precise (scientific, ecological) meaning [App.I on pp.335-6; as provided in a letter on *biodiversity* from John Krebs of the National Environment Research Council]. He then assesses whether the Dearing Committee's call for higher education to manage its own range of institutional types within a framework was vindicated by the analogy. The way in which he accomplished that is worth outlining here since it corresponds to particular features of the work of this dissertation. Those features (in the terms of this dissertation) are headword-based analysis, excessive pursuit of implications and dissemination from figural resources in and-or applied to the text.

In the paper, Watson criticises 'slippery use of allegory and metaphor' in popular discourse around concepts of diversity and selective survival. His critique

selects 23 areas of the Committee's Main Report that refer to *diversity*. He thus examines instances of one headword across a large report (whereas I gather headwords by frequency just from the Summary Report). He takes a particular interest in the use of allegory and metaphor (e.g. of evolution and health), the implications of relatively unexamined notions (especially *diversity*) and (Max) Weberian ideal-types [especially in Figure 17.4, p.330, on *relationships between higher education and society*]. He selects the dominant object of the analogy: diversity of institutions (rather than its usages in reference to the variety of students, governance arrangements or contribution of institutions to regions and localities). He then postulates an 'emergent key concept' of 'disciplined plurality rather than just diversity'. [D. Watson p.331] That step provides a basis for pursuing the text's figure of 'evolution' into contemporary thinking on 'ecosystems' with 'key types of species'—i.e. semantically beyond an everyday reading of the Main Report.

The analogy is deemed to be borne out by the correspondence of the objects of the figure of speech *diversity* with those of the scientific model of *diversity* of a living ecosystem. This leads, in Watson's view, to a semantic vindication of the Committee's call for the higher education sector to 'take responsibility itself for the limits of diversity' (i.e. as if it were a self-regulating ecosystem). [D. Watson p.334]

Sensitivities

The previous paragraph may have overplayed its hand in laying claim to features in common between David Watson's long paper and this document. Yet before we acknowledge a change of section (to one in which a part of a dissertation can take issue with another part, the whole (alienation) and-or itself (hyper-reflexivity)), let us rest briefly with the mood and manœuvre of Watson's text. The overall result is affirmative. Is that by chance? Would the paper have been published if the result of the linguistic experiment proved adverse to the Dearing Report, or inconclusive? Was its conclusion ever in doubt, or was it as foregone as the conclusion of a sermon by a doctrine or an inquiry by its terms of reference? These questions are about the *aleatory*; chance and the enlightened spirit of inquiry, the open or closed mind. This dissertation is in no secure position to ask such questions or reciprocally face up to them itself. Besides, the questions have an empirical strand that invokes an author in person rather than the 'Watson'-of-the-text.

The Inquiry and its members, after all, went to extraordinary and perhaps excessive (counter-productive) lengths to make a progressive difference in awkward political conditions. In his elaborate essay, Watson-of-the-text explains the game, rolls the die and plays out the forfeit to the letter. As a poetic performance, that bespeaks of a yearning for there to exist, at the local level where institutions have their being, a space for the unannounced: the unruly terrain [Michel Leiris 1976] of the experiment, the encounter, that which its witnesses cannot convey.

This section is called *Sensitivities* in recognition of the liberties it takes and the upsets, even damage to relations, they could cause. A tradition of heretical thinking is integral to the academy and indeed to the college and centre of adult (continuing) education. It places enquiry and experiment before administrative convenience and, despite casualties, gradually and sometimes dramatically shifts entrenched positions.

Here by *sensitivities*, I signal that I am concerned about the effects of clumsy moves on my part, insensitive expressions and the causing of administrative problems when there is no good reason to do so. For a start, there is the presumption, here, in this sentence, that this dissertation has some right to judge itself in this hyper-reflexive manner. Should not its gaze be steadfastly trained on the world beyond, without the use of smoke-screens and (especially) mirrors? I shall resort to a table with notes below it.

Table 7 - Some reflexive concerns (about reflexivity)

Transgression	Comment	Notes
Unjust	Victimising an innocent policy proposal whose authorial Committee can no longer defend it.	1.
Regressive	Not promoting social progress: equality of opportunity, access to learning, etc.	2.
Obscurantist	Cf. the renowned difficulty of reading literary theory, and the demand for clarity.	3., 4.
Not (socially) scientific	Contravening disciplinary boundaries of subject matter, techniques and modes of expression.	-
Eclecticist	Adopting an unruly, *polytechnic* approach.	5.
Europeanist, élitist	Creating an oppressive, exclusive genealogy by reviving ancient languages of Latin and Greek.	6.
Exclusivist	Discoursing within a closed academic and-or intellectual community.	7.
Technologistic	Reliance on, and promotion by explicit use of, advanced technological devices not available to everyone.	8.
Hypocritical	Selectively invoking grounds of authority (grand narratives), while 'having it both ways'.	9.
Insouciant	Pressing and accepting charges of misdemeanour against its own text.	10.
Escapist	Promoting critical-theory studies to bypass the 'uncritical' curriculum.	11.
Textually exhausting	Provoking and driving academic performers beyond the limits of physical and mental endurance.	12.

Notes

1. On injustice: For viewpoints on just application of reading and writing practices, see Dronsfield & Midgley [1997] Responsibilities of Deconstruction, especially Morag Patrick's paper based on her then recent dissertation [1995].
2. On regressive tendencies: We may demonstrate my dissertation's apparent lack of progressivism by its wilful or coy refusal to reveal a new Vision to resolve the issues and fulfil the hopes of the Vision of Dearing [1997].
3. On the difficulty of reading literary theory: [Barbara Johnson 1994, *Preface* p.ix]
   ... at a time of militant conservatism and the dominance of corporate values in [the USA] and Western Europe, literary theory threatens to diminish further the declining audience for literature and criticism. Theoretical books are difficult to read; they usually assume that their readers possess knowledge that few who have received a traditional literary education have; they often require massive reassessments of language, meaning, and the world; they seem to draw their life from suspect branches of other disciplines ...
4. On the demand for clarity: cf. C.J.S. Wallia [ca. 1998-9]: '... Mr. Derrida was asked if he minded the fact that almost no one seems to understand what he is talking about. "Why don't you ask a physicist or a mathematician about difficulty?" he responded, a little frostily.'

5. On eclectic pursuits: *polytechnic* (Liddell) *polytekhnes* skilled in divers *[sic]* arts. Yet consider the notion of 'transferable skills'; when to constrict, when to proliferate?
6. Greek is of course a current language, subject to lively debate; there never was a single dialect of 'it'; and forms of Latin are in use now. I also accept a charge of promoting the use of English in ways that obstruct both learners and monolingual speakers of the language.
7. On exclusivity: For a discussion that draws on various works, see Edna Donnelly's review of contributions in Smith & Webster [1997], especially Russell Jacoby on 'insiders' pretending to be 'outsiders'. William Melody asserts that 'university researchers (should) be as interested in convincing policy-makers as their peers'. Phillip Brown and Richard Scase consider 'a "charismatic" type of individual who is more of a "rule-maker" than a "rule-follower" and likely to be at ease within "very ill-defined and ambiguous work settings"'. Anthony Smith's view that 'the growth of flexible (post-modern) organisations' has 'reinforced the divide between "elite" and "mass" forms of higher education'" so that 'It may be only the most prestigious institutions that provide the gateway to social mobility in the future.' The latter account characterises the 'prestigious institutions' sociologically as follows:
   > [Certain critics] can neither accept the "rampant relativism (and phoney egalitarianism that often goes with this) of the post-modernists", nor the knee-jerk "more means worse" mentality of the traditionalists, although they show a surprising naivete in thinking it odd that prestigious universities show reluctance to change their criteria for admission. After all, as they recognise quite rightly, meritocratic access is sustained by privileged social structures in which the middle-classes are best positioned to gain entry to the most elite institutions on the basis of A Level results.
8. On technologism: Enthusiasm in applying such tools suggests the fascination of techno-fetishism 'for its own sake'. A plea of affinity with the Dearing Inquiry in this respect may not mitigate the gravity of dabbling in such cybernetic sources as CTHEORY... and The Culture Machine.
9. On hypocrisy: This criticism usually confronts a supposed 'linguistic turn' that rendered all narratives provisional at best.
10. On insouciance: (OHD: *insouciant* carefree, indifferent) Amounting to complacency, complicity and arrogance; appearing to undermine or detour around more cautious and situated writers.
11. On escapism: We may view the growth of these subjects, especially in the 'new' universities, as opening an alternative route of attainment for adult critical thinkers, and-or as instilling an hegemony of educated, middle-class values.
12. Those of us who have pursued Jacques Derrida's thinking (among others' thinkings) have eventually consumed him (spent, dehisced, exhausted, undone, discarded). However many times he announced his own demise, yet we miss him now that the deed is done. Here is Geoffrey Bennington's précis of their book: Bennington & Derrida, Jacques Derrida [1993, pp.1, 14 and 313-316; on his *Derridabase* web page]:
   > We have, obviously enough, been clumsy. Trying to repeat faithfully the essential features of Derrida's thought, we have betrayed him. By saying that deconstruction is, finally, none other than necessity, and that it is always already at work in the most "metaphysical" texts, we have absorbed Derrida, his singularity and his signature, the event we were so keen to tell you about, into a textuality in which he may well have quite simply disappeared.

Perhaps the most culpable practice that is aspired to here is that of writing provisionally, speculatively or even under erasure (*sous rature*). That is to say: not by deletion but in the movement of crossing (out) while continuing to trace a line of thinking. That sort of practice and especially treating it as if 'we' do it all the time is reprehensible. (Yet do we not? Do we not, yet?) It is off-putting to anyone who is unfamiliar with the style, ineffective as a gesture or in half-measure and annoying to anyone who is quite familiar with it but has had enough.

Compromises

This chapter is about to run out of detours before it has to let go of the text (despite its claims to forego control, to risk leaving the writing to the reader etc.). It has just a few things left to say about the compromises that went into this dissertation's passage from intentions and materials to documentary form.

The first compromise occurs in the drastic act of forgetting, of obliteration from the record, that attends that passage. I imagine it applies to most dissertations. At least, it would be a very different kind of dissertation that just composed pre-existing chapters—approved essays or research reports, perhaps—into the document for submission. This one—because of its topic—has a duty, especially to postgraduate students, to declare its falling-short in acknowledging vital sources. This is not a matter of wilful ingratitude toward formative experiences but a regretful act of necessity. The process closes a literary gate, and doubly guards it against intrusion and re-interpretation, in the collective face of some hundreds of books, papers and web sites. In the wake of my research project, there are draft materials now in writer's limbo and perhaps thousands of notes (from disparate sources, plus many 'out of the blue') of ideas that may have seemed indispensable in their time. What the process has to prevent is any complication of a categorical account of how the dissertation's project, processes and document for submission came about.

> Aside: In any case, according to a (non-foundational) premise of this dissertation's genre-to-come, there is (almost) no end to the disseminative potentials of the text.

Next I note some shortfalls in the application of techniques. As the *excursus* on *Software tools* above describes, for chapter 5 *Deconstructions* I chose not to automate the analysis of phrases (not just headwords) in terms of frequency and collocation in the sample text. I did what I had time for on a manual basis and I judged that a tool would have taken more time to develop (or to adopt and adapt) for this purpose. It seems mainly a matter of curiosity on my part to regard this as a loose end, since its resolution might not transform the linguistic analysis in this case. Across related or disparate documents, though, such a textual research tool might be vital in practice.

Finally as the introduction to this chapter has noted, chapter 8 *Re-membering...* was intended to show a fusion of the techniques employed in the earlier substantive chapters 5-7. In practice, the philosophical and imaginary excursions were found to disrupt the flow unless used sparingly, so chapter 8 mainly relies on the basic techniques of chapter 5, *Deconstructions*: word frequency analyses and association by proximity, etymology and reading-askance.

5 Deconstructions

Aporia

> *aporia* embarrassment, perplexity; doubt; need; difficulty, impassableness. (Langenscheidt); difficulty of passing, want, poverty; *aporos* pathless, hard to deal with, helpless, at a loss (Liddell)

As explained in the previous chapter, the investigative approach used in this dissertation is stimulated by the modes and exemplary practices of deconstruction. It pursues a querying and ambivalent, doubling reversal—or rather oscillation—of a text's favoured terms. In an undecideable interplay of terms, the text often finds itself in *aporia*, an impasse. As we noted above, the term *higher education* features as a dominant rhetorical expression of the debate addressed by the Committee's Vision. The discussion below considers distinctions that feature prominently in rhetorical contests over its scope and purpose. A constellation of terms that includes *deconstruction*, *aporia* and *différance* imposes no precision of meaning or practice on each of those terms. Indeed, the notion of *différance* alone is enough to unsettle any attempt at an authoritative, rigorous and lasting definition of any or all of them. Texts play on texts, almost without end. Yet a deconstructive outlook gestures impossibly toward an origin, before a name or the distinction of being or becoming an 'it' distinct from other text(s). It always admits of a reality—perhaps any number of realities—'out there', enmeshing any given text. The so-called 'deconstructive' passages below are much too formulaic, dependent on a slender crutch of etymology and episodic in time; yet they may just begin to 'loosen up' (analyse, yet also re-synthesise) the Vision's sample text in occasionally surprising directions.

> Convention: Below, as elsewhere in this dissertation, the sign '•' marks an undecideable interplay of terms.

Freedom and coercion

This section tries to 'unpack' or 'decipher' ways in which the NCIHE's Vision articulates and encodes relations between *higher education and the learning society* in an interplay of *freedom • coercion*. It traces contingencies through the Vision's varied expressions: in particular those of imperatives, dependencies and a future tense. These prescriptive expressions enclose and encase, as it were, the sample text's few but rhetorically vital declarations of freedom and autonomy. Thus they shape, delimit and define the envisaged freedoms. Conversely, this section examines explicit references to coercion. It attempts to show that each prescribed act of coercion involves a defining element of release, such as a release from responsibility, i.e. a freedom of a kind. Hence particular forms of freedom define the contours of the coercive elements. Taking both dependencies together, we arrive at an undecideable instability of meaning; that is to say, a

stance of *aporia* in reading the relations of *freedom • coercion* that the Vision articulates.

The Vision firmly subscribes to a modern, liberal and progressive ethic. That is to say, it promotes individual efforts and freedoms to bring about far-reaching reforms in favour of equality of opportunity across society in the UK—granted here that *society* is a richly ambivalent term [cf. R Scruton 1982 p.438; R. Williams 1988 pp.291-5]. In several passages the text explicitly advocates *freedom* and *autonomy* for individuals and for the institutions it enlists to serve them. Its *Terms of Reference* (pp.5-6) required the Committee to take account of notions of *citizenship*, *personal development* and *technological possibilities*; also of higher education acting *in its own right*. However the Summary Report exceeds that call in the conduct of its response. The manner of publication of the Inquiry's voluminous Report was exemplary in handling materials derived from contributors' submissions. These it released for scrutiny by interested parties, both private and corporate, and it invited open discussion of them. The act of publication thus bespoke of active citizenship and open communication; of rights to be heard, to be informed, to pass comment and to participate in a programme of betterment for society.

This apparent idealism is not based on naiveté; it prescribes checks and balances of limits and duties commensurate with every right that it recognises. Each passage in the Vision that offers a particular freedom also prescribes a framework of constraints and responsibilities. That framework is not simple and uniform; through nuanced language, it administers diverse principles of motivation to the notional free agent in society.

We shall now consider a framework in which the autonomies and freedoms are enmeshed, while looking for patterns of implied and explicit relations. The modalities and frequencies of the framework appear thus: often promoting moral imperatives (*should*) and often voicing an imperative constraint (*require, demand, must* and *oblige*). The text seldom exercises other modes: of the aleatory (i.e. originary and risk-taking: *commit*), the judicial (*determine*), the evidential (*demonstrate*) and natural contingency (*necessary*). In a casual reading, these words may seem arbitrary and almost interchangeable, so it is worth dwelling briefly on their semantic imports of forms of coercion. We will then be better placed to consider the patterns in which they are combined in respect of particular objects in the purview of the text.

Moral coercion, the dominant and most widespread dimension, is also the most problematic. From a Kantian perspective it counts as a form of influence rather than coercion, since a person retains her identity as a moral agent when influenced by reasons to act in a particular manner. [R. Scruton 1982 p.70: *coercion*] The imperative ground implies force or threat of force to reduce freedom of action, whilst retaining some personal integrity of intention within the limits imposed. The aleatory act (*to commit*) is pertinent here since that is the form of behaviour the Committee, as such, exemplifies. It is *committed*, that is to say, sent as a band to accomplish an end. The mission involves trust in a course of action and a forsaking of alternatives, as if by throwing one's lot into a joint venture. The outcome of the pledged act could turn out, for instance, to be a reward for dedication or a term of imprisonment as a criminal. (OHD: *commit*) Judicial review of legislative or executive acts is inherently problematic in its doubling of guardianship for the future with retrospective dispensation. Yet it is 'clearly both possible, and also necessary, if there are to be constitutional guarantees of individual rights.' [R. Scruton 1982 p.241: *'quis custodiet ipsos custodes?'*, i.e. 'who keeps watch on the watchkeepers themselves?'; cf. the 'double guard' that Jacques Derrida assigns to the university to watch over itself, in J Derrida 1984a pp.26-27] The evidential review is in keeping with the text's

calls for openness and clarity, and with its own distinctness of language. (Cassell: *evidens* from *ex-* out + *video* to see)

The Committee promotes respect for evidence as a characteristic value of higher education (paragraph 8) and, for its own part, adduces evidence in support of its recommendations. Thus a judicial and academic principle of evidence and scrutiny informs the Committee's approach to securing and maintaining manifest co-operation; yet it leaves open a risky freedom to secure, select and re-present evidence to suit an intention. The final form of coercion—though this need not be an exhaustive list—is that of necessity. It conjures up fate (beyond appeal), by way of predestination and natural laws. Whilst *necessary* is seldom used, wherever it occurs (paragraphs 38, 56 and 81; Rec.23) it eliminates any concession to free will.

Thus, overall, the text wields an armoury (as it were) of coercive strategies that variously inflect, constrain or eliminate the occasional freedoms that it proffers. The coercive framework determines a space for matters of freedom or autonomy. Since the wording used to suggest coercion (*should, must* etc.) is fairly interchangeable in everyday idiom, it would be intrusive of us to pick on each pairing of coercion and imputed freedom to construct a logical, prescriptive ordering. Rather, we can assume that coercive wording is disseminated across topics to convey exemplary attitudes toward their objects (e.g. of robustness, diplomacy, resentment, etc.). The pattern may suggest how the Committee would be inclined to act, were it constituted as an executive rather than an advisory body.

The functional and supportive context of higher education is addressed on moral grounds. Several sections of the text are peppered with the word *should*: *Aims and purposes* (of higher education); *Supporting scholarship and research*; *Management and governance of higher education institutions*; *The pattern of institutions which provide higher education* and *Who should pay for higher education?*. This pattern projects a normative shell around higher education, to place conditions of proper conduct and expectation upon its agents and on externally interested parties. Major components of higher education are subjected to both moral and imperative injunctions. To that extent they are cast as being more biddable than the external agents. The relevant section titles include *Students and learning*, *Staff in higher education*, *Qualifications and standards*, and (since this is a plan without predestination) *Future demand for higher education*.

Two topics are framed in imperative modes: *Communications and Information technology* and *The funding requirement* (across higher education in a short term of three years, then for the rest of 20 years). Both 'communications and information technology' (or 'technologies', paragraph 65) and the short-term portion of the 'funding requirement' are seen as shortfalls to be dealt with urgently. The long-term funding might have been placed in the external, moral 'shell'; yet it is treated as if it were a controllable factor. That makes sense in terms of a progression through short- and medium-term actions and of re-planning toward that longer term, with contingencies and decisions along the way. The richest topic in terms of coercion is the one that proclaims the Vision's foresight: *A vision for 20 years: the learning society*. [NCIHE 1997 pp.8-9] It invokes the *genre* and *timbre* of an inaugural address, with attendant dangers summoned by the echo of the knell that marks time: 'Henceforth...'. That section balances moral, imperative and aleatory (chancy, random) expressions, with occasional judicial and evidential ones.

Predestination (expressed as necessity) is absent there. That gap allows the Committee to portray itself as master of its vision—as speaking freely and fairly in the present as it directs an unblinking gaze onto the future. It echoes to Jacques

Derrida's query as to whether the university is the master of its own destination, that 'in view of which it stands its ground'. [J. Derrida 1984a p.8] The Vision's framework of suasion (urging, by advising and gratifying, without force) is complex. The rhetorical components range from normative (in the *Recommendations*) through to entrusting (*commend* and *commit*), yet they are always expressed in a framework of consequences. The Vision's appeal to, and example of, right choice by individuals and institutions as free agents is balanced by a range of imperative demands that imply sanctions. Yet by its rhetoric and example, the Vision urges those agents to take risks (*commit*) in the present, in prospect of a better future for all. Its desire is to secure compliance through free will and a shared vision rather than through sanctions and threat of force. However the latter is occasionally made explicit as a course of last resort, so we will now attend to those instances.

Expressions of violence are associated with students (as needing protection), higher education as a whole (a powerful force in society) and global economies (that conjure inexorable forces). Thus students may *struggle, fail* and *drop out* of higher education (cf. Cassell: *fallo* to make to slip, to beguile; and Liddell: *sfallo* especially to trip up in wrestling). They may be lured into financial problems, and their learning experience will be *damaged*; unless, we must hasten to add, protective measures are enforced, including a *fair and robust* system for complaints (OHD: *robust* ... not given to nor confused by subtleties). Higher education is portrayed as both powerful (e.g. paragraph 61: 'a significant force in regional economies', and Recommendation 25: 'degree-awarding powers') and as behaving in a compliant manner (paragraph 12: '... has adapted as the needs ... have changed ...'). However, realisation of the linked interests of students' learning and the international standing of the UK (paragraphs 31-33) 'does depend on a change in the values of higher education' so there must be 'a radical change in attitudes to teaching'. Surveillance is prescribed, commensurate with the degree of non-compliance (paragraph 50):

> To the extent that higher education adopts these recommendations, [i.e. four points in Recommendation 25] the need for the apparatus of quality assessment and audit by the Quality Assurance Agency will be correspondingly reduced.

The threat is menacing: which of us can withstand *the apparatus*?

In specific, personified respects, higher education itself falls short of expectations. It is liable to exert inadequate *control* (paragraph 46), to *fail* to respond to a challenge (to harness an infrastructure of technology, paragraph 67) and to allow *excess* of membership (of governing bodies, Recommendation 57). It is prone to being *discouraged* (by external factors, paragraph 81 and Recommendation 68) and to making *excuses* (for 'lower standards or poor quality', paragraph 78). Despite such gross institutional frailties, higher education is enjoined to respond to global—political and technological—*forces* (paragraphs 17, 21 and 23), by treating them as opportunities to be *exploited*. [cf. Ulrich Beck's 'sub-political system of scientific, technological and economic modernization' cited in T. Bewes 1997 p.187 from U. Beck 1992 p.186.] This applies especially to the results of research and the use of communications and information technology (paragraphs 20, 34, 56 and 57). Thus the higher education system 'needs to help individuals and society to understand and adapt to the implications of change, while maintaining the values which make for a civilised society.'

Whereas higher education is powerful, technologically advanced and a potential guardian of society, it is to be made compliant and itself guarded by a bureau of the government against lapses in its behaviour arising from its as yet unreformed attitudes. Its privileges are to be enjoyed on probation, on strict

condition of good conduct. Negligence and excess are deemed to have occurred, and any shortfall in relation to higher educational institutions' joint and several responsibilities toward students and the economic standing of the UK will be publicly denounced. Yet the whole emphasis on public accountability for proper behaviour and its benefits to society is grounded in the Vision's yearning that all parties should not only be free agents but desirous of such good conduct and visible results. It is to expressions of liberty that we now turn.

The notions of *freedom, autonomy* and *openness* are explicitly identified in the Vision, in a statement of 'three principles to underpin' the effectiveness of higher educational institutions. (paragraph 73) The statement both proclaims these notions as originary—for their own sakes, as principled—and as instrumental toward institutional effectiveness. Each notion is made subject to external evaluation as follows. *Freedom* is programmed in terms of dedication and pursuit of acclaim (paragraph 7) and of protection where lawful (paragraph 73). Regarding *autonomy*, insofar as 'institutional autonomy should be respected', the institution is beholden to approval of its compliance (with a programme of scrutiny, as being 'well-managed' and engaged on 'missions', paragraph 6), respectability (paragraph 73) and public confidence (paragraph 77). The Vision invokes *openness* in several respects: the liberating effects of access to 'a global marketplace' (paragraph 20), of access to communications and information technology (Recommendation 46) and of arrangements of governance.

A wider notion of liberation through technology is prescribed in Annex A to the Committee's terms of reference as follows: '... new technology is opening up the possibility of new forms of teaching and learning'. The 'proliferation of knowledge, technological advances and the information revolution' are linked through 'increasingly competitive international markets' to 'labour market demand for those with higher level education and training'. However these liberating effects are subjected to exposure to commercial attack, to speculation (reaching beyond short-term, remedial actions) and a duty of responsiveness. Thus each explicit attempt to promote liberating ideals is qualified—in the same breath, as it were—with limits, barriers and countervailing forces.

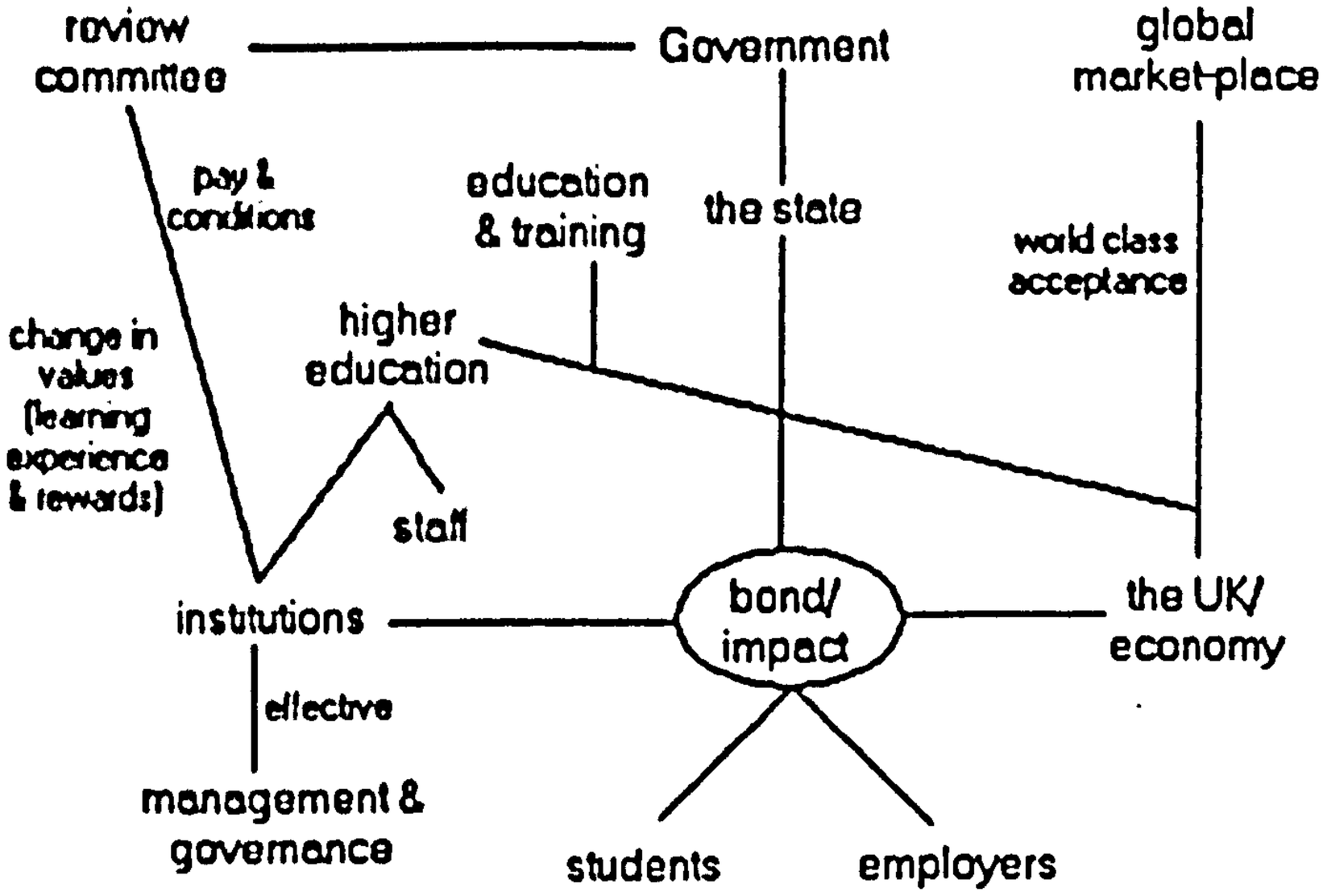
Perhaps only the UK and the global market-place are recognised as sovereign powers. Yet even these—together with 'individuals, the state, employers and providers of education and training'—may be seen as instrumental toward an ultimate social end: that of 'the achievement of an improved quality of life in the UK'. (paragraph 2) Our search for a liberal framework of *freedom, autonomy* and *openness* finds tokens of these ideals in the text, yet those instances present each promised freedom under close escort of watchers and enforcers. They in turn are under sufferance of delivering those guarded liberties in full measure within the schedule of a programme.

That hemmed-in quest for liberty does not exhaust the available perspectives on relations of freedom and coercion between higher education and the learning society. Hoping to escape the apparent impasse, we next shift our attention from those ideal objects of *freedom, autonomy* and *openness* toward—in a somewhat Heideggerian manner—explicit relations of dependency among parties. A structure based on a network of dependencies suggests a medieval, feudal society, as outlined below: [D. Robertson 1993 pp.187-8]

> The whole edifice of feudalism was a complex of two-way obligations, firmly set in an unquestioned set of statuses, rather than being based on contractual rights or more vague notions of citizenship or nationality.

This resemblance is borne out in the Summary Report's eulogy to Scottish arrangements for higher education (paragraphs 28, 44, 61 & 124-5).

Figure 2 - A compact of dependencies



The Commission's Vision specifies two main modes of dependency. The first is unidirectional. The economy of the UK depends on the global market-place and on acceptance as 'world class' of the higher education system within the UK's wider provision for education and training. Higher education in turn depends on its staff and institutions for a change in values to ensure the quality of students' learning experiences and the standing of academic awards. The institutions of higher education depend on effective management and governance. The second mode is that of interdependency whereby those institutions, the students, the UK economy and employers at large, plus the state are already interdependent in common bondage that should be ratified in a 'compact' among them.

That scheme of unidirectional and interdependent modes seems clear enough until we examine a third notion of dependency: that of an independent review committee (to advise on staff pay and conditions: paragraphs 51-52 and Recommendation 50). The higher educational institutions as employers are called on to appoint such a committee, after consultation with staff representatives, to serve under a 'Chairman ... appointed on the nomination of the Government'.

Whereas those are ordinary arrangements for setting up committees, they do qualify the import of *independent* in this context. The institutions appoint; the Government decrees and nominates. In particular, this draws attention to the manner of institution of the Dearing Committee as an exemplary means of recommending national policy. It has unsettling effects on our view of the main modes of dependency. In comparison, one-way relations appear sketchy and perverse. For instance, we would expect the wellbeing of higher education to depend on the UK economy, the staff and institutions to depend on the condition of higher education and higher education in turn to depend on management and governing bodies.

In the second mode, the institutions, the students, the employers, the state and the UK economy are rather implausibly presented as co-equals, bound in a voluntary compact among peers. In both modes, problematic relations are glossed over, such as that between higher education and wider education and training; between the UK Government and the state; and between national economies and the alleged global market-place.

We may ask what—or who, if personified—'is' or represents the UK, its economy and higher education in this model. We could pursue this line of questioning into notions of civilisation and democracy within the Vision, or refrain from doing so on the grounds that we are already looking too closely at the Vision's persuasive discourse to yield any firm answers.

Whereas *dependency* appears too diffuse a notion to yield much by way of certainty, we can expect the notion of *response* to give more concrete results. In its text, the Vision calls and we respond; it beckons, and the public assembly moves in the direction it indicates. Its specific calls for agents in society to respond to changes and needs are indicative of that general direction. Thus we read that the individual has responsibilities to society in return for respect of individual rights (in paragraph 5). Certain staff in higher education have teaching responsibilities (paragraph 70). Institutions of higher education are responsible for informing students' choices and awarding degrees (paragraphs 49 and 93). Governing bodies should respond to their institutions' external constituencies (paragraph 73 and Recommendation 57). On a regional basis, higher education institutions should be 'responsive to the needs of local industry and commerce' and 'foster entrepreneurship among students and staff in higher education' (paragraph 64). The origin of this cascade of responsibilities seems to lie in the notion of the UK's *nation, society* or (as an attribute of the UK) its *economy*. Thus the Government is responsible for responding to demand for increased opportunities and diversity in higher education (paragraphs 4, 72 and 78). It is tasked with doing so in a balanced manner as between young students on the one hand and mature, post-graduate and part-time students on the other (paragraphs 22 and 86).

Thus far the network of responsibilities carries a theme of punctual payment of social dues in the context of a national treaty. In a *global* context (paragraphs 20-22) we read that 'other countries' higher education systems are responding' to changes brought about by new technology in a global market-place such that 'The UK cannot afford to be left behind.' This call assumes that higher educational institutions' behaviour in the global market-place can serve national ends. The interplay between international and global models unsettles the previous hierarchy of national responsibilities. What, we may ask, if the disparate parties—individuals and institutions, including those of industry and commerce—will comply with such a compact only so long as it suits their interests? For instance, we might ask whether commercial entities—personified as consumers and providers—can be contained within sovereign territories, or may instead choose among frameworks of responsibility from time to time or even simultaneously. That would draw us into the morass of liberal and realist, (inter)national and global relations. More precisely we may ask whether different rules effectively apply to those who must stay and those who can go, or move to and fro. Would the mechanisms of coercion have to regulate movement so as to exact responsible performance?—and so forth. Such thoughts bring the issue of autonomy in its liberal guises of free will, free trade etc. to the fore across the whole scheme of responsibilities.

The Committee's Summary Report refers to several periods of time from a nominal perspective of the UK in the mid-1990s. By situating the Vision at a central vantage point of the UK as a first approximation, we can overlook (as it were) differences of viewpoint, notably those from within Scotland and those within England-Wales-and-perhaps-Northern-Ireland; plus differences among the 'regions' of the latter entity. The text describes conditions in the UK (and other countries, from a UK perspective) in the mid-1990s and in previous decades. As to the future, the Vision refers to short, medium and long periods spanning the following 20 years. It presents that future in overlapping ways. These include firstly a normative mode (as in paragraph 2: 'Over the next 20 years, the United

Kingdom must create a society committed to learning throughout life.'). Secondly there is a constative ('answerable to a requirement of truth and verisimilitude'—Lentricchia 1995 p.212) purpose and function (as in paragraph 2: 'Education is ... fundamental to the achievement of an improved quality of life in the UK.'). Thirdly there is a mode of continuity (as in paragraph 19: 'The world of work is in continual change: ...') and a determinate or conditional future tense (such that 'we expect that students will soon need their own portable computers ...' in paragraph 68).

We have noted some futurist (OED: yet to be fulfilled) effects of the normative and imperative statements; now we will consider the play of freedom and coercion in the sample text's uses of the future tense. The Vision specifies a near future in unqualified terms that would appear presumptuous and sacrilegious in many contexts, e.g. without a '*Deo volente*' or 'if we are spared'. That style is not culturally out of place. Indeed, use of the future tense imparts a factual, natural tone—almost performative (making things become as stated)—to matters that are otherwise subject to doubt or disputation. Since the described acts or situations have not come to pass (nor their continuity assured, where already in train) at its time of writing, the Vision's prediction is subject to contingencies or misunderstanding; for instance in its stating that 'We believe that the best progress will be made if ...'. Such a construct is hostage to recollection of a system of *belief* and a system of evaluation of whether *best progress* has indeed been *made*. Such a profession of belief is almost performative, in that we can only compare it with actions that could be motivated in other ways. [for J.L. Austin's notion of *performativity*, see for instance Lentricchia 1995 p.212]

The basis of the Vision, though, is a rational chain of known contingencies: subject to such-and-such, the outcome will be thus. The matter-of-fact tone often avoids the emphatic word *shall*. (The history and usages of *shall* and *will* are complex and nuanced; for a brief account see Bloomsbury 1994 pp.96-97.) Perhaps it does so to avoid provoking interested parties who might demur since that would hinder their acceptance of the Vision. To use *shall* incautiously could precipitate reflection on, and perhaps rejection of, the whole Vision, which is only offered in its entirety. Thus *will* supplants *shall*, rendering it inaudible. To look at the Vision's point of view on the *future* involves questioning its attempt to prescribe events beyond its originating Committee's duration.

The Committee conducted an inquiry (hearing), reflected and came to a view (vision). In querying its text, we must 'view viewing' and 'hear hearing' as in Jacques Derrida's turns of phrase [J. Derrida 1984a p.26]:

> The time for reflection is also the chance for turning back on the very conditions of reflection, in all the senses of that word, as if ... one could finally see sight, view viewing. As if one could hear hearing, in other words, seize the inaudible ...

To 'tune in' to the Vision, we need to adjust our apparatus to a fatalistic sense of the future, the *to-come*. (Cassell: *futurum*, as in *videre in futurum*, to see into that which is to be—T. Livius Patavinus, historian; Liddell: *fuo* to beget, to be by nature)

When the Vision nominates agents and assigns outcomes to them, its actions delineate a scheme of relationships among components of higher education and society. The most prominent pattern relates directly to higher education. Usually, the Vision assigns an active or structural role (e.g. to *make, drive, face, depend, comprise, include* or *contribute*) to higher education as a sector of education in the UK. However, it also differentiates between institutional roles. For example we note the summary entwining of foresight with being in paragraph 7:

> The higher education sector will ... include institutions of ... Other institutions will see their role as ... Some will see themselves as ...; others will be ... But all will be committed to ...

Students' conditions are circumscribed with expectations ('will soon need their own ...', 'will need access to ...', 'will be required to ...', and 'will be expected to ...'). Various other political and educational notions are invoked (e.g. as *needing* and *requiring*): 'nations ...' and 'the UK will need to ...', 'that commitment ...', 'that future ...', 'the full exploitation ... will require ...'; and 'a framework of qualifications ... will cater for ...'.

Economic notions are also cited as determining factors, among other examples of predetermination (e.g. '... external changes will be even more influential ...', 'The new economic order will place an increasing premium on ...', '... competitive advantage for advanced economies will lie in ...', and '... national economic return ... is expected to fall ... it will still meet ...'). Each such statement is linked to a desired outcome (e.g. 'the wellbeing of our democratic civilisation', 'collaboration' between institutions, 'wider participation', 'new and better' ways of doing things' and national economic 'return from investment') or to avoidance of undesirable results (e.g. 'unnecessary barriers to collaboration' among institutions). Positive trends are forecast in paragraph 25, but with a difference (emphasis added):

> Demand for higher education from people of all ages *will* continue to grow. Improvements in educational achievement at school and in further education *will* increase the number of people *ready and willing* to move on to higher education. ...

Here, the routine use of *will* for the future tense is supplemented by the phrase *ready and willing*. Whereas we might conjecture how the other terms of that forecast—demand for higher education from people of all ages, etc.—might be operationalised in a social-scientific study, the exuberant phrase *ready and willing* would render such a claim ambitious. How would one set out to prove readiness, beyond a banal reckoning of formal qualifications or economic demand? And how could willingness, as if in the absence of or immunity to coercion or external incentive, be assayed outside of a court of law? Though this slight anomaly occurs only once, it casts some doubt on the Vision's forecasts.

We can conjecture some affirmative charge throughout the text's frequent expressions of *will*-ing; a complex hope of a grand coming-about and coming-together. This suggests a millenarian mood at work in the Vision, yet it cannot let go of rational grounds of prediction. Every coercive attempt to prescribe a causal link, bridge-like, between present conditions and *the learning society* is accompanied by an insistent desire for liberation into a realm of pure volition. The Vision is one of opportunity and freedom, of the removal of *unnecessary obstacles* and well as of the provision of what it 'sees' as necessary constraints and constructs.

The inextricable interplay of *freedom* and *coercion* in the sample text is particularly intense in its notion of *adaptation*. (OHD: *adapt* to adjust, make suitable for new surroundings; also Cassell: *aptus* depending upon and *apud* fastened to, in the works of). Its etymology associates *adaptation* with many of the Vision's themes and practices including binding, connection, alliance, equipping, presenting, preparing, getting ready, citing and depending upon.

In the text, *adaptation* links an agent reciprocally and communally with her surroundings, yet emphasises change on the part of the agent rather than any mutual, ecological interplay. There is a strong liberating element in the Vision's associations with new surroundings, as if it were adapting a new frontier to

settlers. Examples include prosthesis (*equipping, fitting out*), purposive alliance and preparedness (as in *ready and willing*, above), citation (in reciting discursive phrases) and familiar proximity (as with practical knowledge and skills). In its restrictive vein, the Vision prescribes a hierarchy of adaptations: *higher education* adapts to the *needs* of clients, *individuals* and *society* adapt to *global change*, while the local, regional and national levels of *economy* adapt to *implications of global change*.

We cannot detach a prescriptive reading from a liberating one, since the structural framework serves both to create spaces for and to channel the freedoms that it proclaims. It proclaims and affords only well-ordered modes of liberty.

Progress, stasis and decline

In several ways, the Vision makes a *moving* tribute to the ideal of higher education in the learning society. It carries the reader along with a brisk, insistent rhythm of progress and advance. Here we shall consider some of the ways in which it establishes that figurative rhythm. These ways include: public progress from dis-*unity* toward *the learning society*; the individual's journey of *lifelong learning*; plus the Committee's journey of *report*age from asking and receiving submissions to giving verdicts. There are also the propulsive figures of progress and advance, repelled or levered away from deprecated figures of stasis, decline and decadence. We shall attend to that rhythm's grounding in stability, permanence and recurrence. They provide anchor points by which we can detect the recurrent movements.

The interplays of going and staying, tradition and innovation, continuity and rupture, etc., afford the rocking motion for thrust or leverage by which the text boosts and steers its passage toward its foregone conclusion.

> Aside, as a point of reference: These pairings—or rather the link of pairing with *institution* as both formation and structure—echoes Simon Morgan Wortham's [1999, pp.1-48] previously noted account of *leverage* in Jacques Derrida's commentary on Martin Heidegger's discussion of one of Van Gogh's many paintings of shoes.

To succeed as an exemplar of progress and accomplishment, the Report has to *exceed*; to move (as it were) *beyond itself* or overshoot the target of its trajectory.

Time is of the essence here. To *report* is necessary and must be punctual but is only momentary. For lasting effect and depth of affect the text has to overflow into time after—and hence, summatively, before or in the face of—its apparent origin. It must (already) have *been*, since it cannot afford time or space for tarrying in repose or doubt at any step along its path. Were the text or its conjured programme to stop or pause, it would *fall short* and be stuck fast in time and viewpoint, far short of its goal of *the learning society*. Dependencies would be unsatisfied and confused, becoming unravelled and thrown out of kilter. The Vision would fall behind all potential for social movement, thus learning no more, and landing up as a monument (a viewpoint or monopole) to the fixity against which it formerly gained leverage for its progression and its gathering of views in passage. Fleet-footed rivals would forge ahead and claim all the prizes.

The text derives energy for sustaining its heading and its head-*way* (OHD: rate of progress) by an affective fusion of paired concepts. For instance, whenever

the word *way* or *ways* is mentioned, it is accompanied by a synthesis of terms whose meanings conflict or whose direct correlation we may not care to take for granted. Squeezed together, they strain apart in the textual fabric. Thus we find such pairings as: *stored and transmitted, depth with complementary breadth, easy and co-ordinated access, new and better ways, clarity and effectiveness,* and *impact ... on institutional behaviour.* (paragraphs 2, 36 etc.)

That which may be stored and transmitted in a reproducible way through new technologies (know-how) is here called *information.* It is idealised (in an early Habermasian manner) as capable of transparent retention and communication. The pairing *depth with complementary breadth* refers to a previously mooted basis for study in the educational system after the age of 16. In its UK, 'national' context, the word *complementary* deftly begs the question of whether complementarity of study already pertains in Scotland—and if so, whether it could be transposed to England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The phrase *easy and co-ordinated access* occurs in a call for higher education institutions to give local firms, 'especially small and medium sized enterprises, easy and co-ordinated access to information about higher education services in their areas.' For best fit of this pairing, we can confidently assign the *ease* to the firms ('enterprises') and the *co-ordination* to the institutions.

The converse reference—co-ordination by firms and ease for institutions—would make light of the co-ordinating effort incurred by higher education and the question of whether its institutions would enjoy reciprocal access to firms. The euphemism of 'the challenge to find new and better ways of doing things', despite 'dramatic' and intensifying 'improvements in efficiency', precludes talk of struggles for survival by all parties during sustained cuts in funding and harsh economic conditions. It implies that previous and existing ways are worse than whatever is declared 'new'. It also assumes a full measure of historical and contemporary awareness on the part of whoever judges *newness.* The rhetorical thrust of *clarity and effectiveness* applies to institutional governance. Whatever is unclear to the omniscient observer is expected to be inefficient, and inefficiency may be remedied by clarity of reportage.

In the final pairing, we observe a conflict between the continuity of *institutional behaviour* and the event of *impact.* The conflict's synthesis lies in the effects of sustained *control of behaviour,* i.e. '... the general notion that behaviour is under the control of the contingencies of reinforcement and stimulation.' (A.S. Reber 1985 p.86) Though many further pairings are expressed or implied in association with the metaphor of the *way,* the examples above serve to illustrate the fusions that fuel the rhetoric of the text.

The Vision unfailingly projects an air of radical overhaul and unbounded possibility, sufficient to bring about a renaissance of higher education in the United Kingdom. That is a truly exciting, even extravagant, prospect. Whereas the Vision does not use the term *renaissance* (which would imply a previous cycle of birth and decline of higher education) and rarely mentions *radical* or *boundaries,* the text is packed with revitalising possibilities that are represented in aims, endorsements, recommendations and suggestions. Yet nothing radical or unbounded is set loose in the text, as it were. At no point does the Vision allow itself to run off or get carried away, so to speak, with unbridled enthusiasm. That punctual self-restraint invests the Report's proposals with a semblance of prudence, realism and—above all—attainability. It presents goals, as if close up and about to happen: we only lack the means and will. It occludes whatever factors might hamper its rhetorical affect and performative effect in proclaiming targets (e.g. often starting with: 'We recommend that ...').

We will now consider the figures of movement through which the Vision *advances* its proposals. In each instance, we will find an explicit interplay of

release and restraint that privileges movement over limitation. Movement is conveyed in various expressions—such as *process, pursuit, forward* and *success*—though the firm favourites for setting the tone are *progress* and *advance*. (NCIHE 1997 paragraphs 4, 7 etc.) *Advance* occurs in distinct usages with respect to space and time. In global contexts (of study provision, learning and professional reward), the mode of *advancement* is historical, and thus securely located beyond question and recall, as in the phrase 'advanced nations'. In the most situated context—that of the Committee of Inquiry itself, imagined in plenary session for the last time—the *advance* is intentional (as in: 'to advance our work' and 'advanced the case for ...'). (Zygmunt Bauman expounds frameworks of global-local interplay, e.g. in Z. Bauman 1998.) A broadly similar polarity occurs in the Vision's references to *progress*. Most usually, a yet-to-be-assessed activity (especially that of study) is linked to a retrospective fixity in a framework, data record or other mechanism of monitoring (e.g. respectively as marked by attainment of a degree, in a student profile or having followed a qualification route).

The less usual expressions of progress are associated with retrospective outcomes: *process, pursuit, forward* and *success*. They include standards (evidenced in archives of examination papers, etc.), outcomes of decision-making (about learning and teaching), replacement of a previous status or precedent (of professional or institutional behaviour) and matching, retaining or adding to a previous quantity or extent (of funding or curriculum). These usages reinforce an impression that movement does not occur, as such; rather that it is deemed to have occurred at the moment of its being recorded in an administrative framework.

> Aside on tenses: The intentional trace may be located grammatically in a future perfect tense: *this will have been so*. A doubling movement prepares a genealogy *in advance* while it is yet *in progress*. The summative verdict determines, enfolds and supplants the activity that it re-marks.

This globally performative or ratifying notion of movement (as officially having-taken-place) rebounds on the local situation of the Inquiry's Report and helps to explain a deep anxiety within the text. Unless and until the Report has been accepted (taken seriously, countersigned, endorsed, ratified or even put into effect), its existence in motion (*progress, advance, etc.*)—and hence into effect—remains in doubt.

The question of criteria for acceptance as adequate is a moot point, or existentially null. As a fixed, textual object, the Vision can never confirm, or become aware of, itself as ever having taken place nor verify the extent of its having been effective. Thus it remains in limbo of a sort, forever of marginal, ornamental effect in its own absence to itself and its rightful place in the fabric and garment of society. (OHD: *limbo* a place for forgotten or unwanted things; Cassell: *limbus* a border or fringe) If the Vision was in no position to touch eternal truths, so to speak, the anxiety may have found tokens of immortality in its several modes of publication, especially within the recent, astounding capacity of the Internet and the prospect of discussions on Usenet. That all comes prior to, and affords consolation apart from, any empirical results to be found beyond the Committee's purview.

Perhaps the analysis above presses some words unduly hard so as to demonstrate fixities embedded in the Vision's expressions of movement, particularly those of progress and advance. To be fair, the Vision emphasises its own firmness and constancy in several respects. We shall next consider its expressions of stasis and persistence, including *continue, establish, remain, stay*

and *stability*. (paragraphs 1, 2 etc.) Broadly and variously, these play out an oscillation of tradition and risk. We will first consider the usages of the most frequent terms—*continue* and *establish*—then briefly compose the associations arising from the rest. *Continue* is radically caught between on-going and staying, remaining and continuing without changing course, moving onward and being held back. (Cassell: *contineo*—*con* and *teneo*—to bind together, be silent about, repress, morally restrain) It bespeaks of a desire to grasp within a compact and through understanding.

The contents—and here we must speak of the institutions and individual members of higher education—are to be kept in their place or occupation, while the agents of the binding silently comprehend, exact obedience and impose moral restraint. Just as *advance* linked the perfectly irrevocable (*advanced*) and provisional (*to advance*), so *establish* links the traditional (*established*) and inaugural (*to establish*). Both strands combine stasis and movement. *Established* does so by inheritance (a movement of the same across generations) and *to establish* does so by a gesture of grounding (bringing about and appointing the new, or as-if-new). This invests whatever is proposed with a patina of permanence and respectability. Yet in the act of establishment—as a promise of continuity—lies the existential anxiety of recurrence: will there be returns, will they be many, will they be happy?

The seasonal festival is haunted by an unmentioned or vaunted *renaissance* (re-birth) or revival, necessarily as perhaps to-have-been the last hurrah, the ultimate of its kind to celebrate the inaugural act in question and always teetering *in the balance*. (We will attend to the anxieties that haunt recalling (re-membering) and forgetting or un-learning in chapter 8.) As for the other expressions of stasis—*remain* and *stay* (with its cognates *stable* and *stability*)—these are engaged in avoiding, preventing or deferring processes of progress and change. (Cassell: *remaneo* to be left over; OHD: *stay* to dwell temporarily.) They seek either to construct anew (*build, innovate*) or to rework existing structures (*add, change, develop, expand, grow, intensify* and *progress*). Etymologically, they imply processes of removal (with difficulty) and of objects being dealt with, derived from an origin or trained for swiftness. The play of fixing down and striking out suggests the rocking movement (to-and-fro, *fort-da*) in the Futurist—and timelessly human—theme of those who stay and those who go.

Expressions of faltering and overthrow are rare in the Vision. Perhaps their presence would have shifted its tone from the confidence of knowing one's ground to one of excessive gravity (solemnity) beside a precipice. Those that do occur—such as *decline, fall, reduce* and *break down*—reinforce the play of movement and fixity, through contrary gestures and euphemism. (paragraphs 3, 13 etc.) Thus for instance a relative *decline* (in salaries) is offset by an increase (in a ratio of posts). Boundaries are *breaking down* to make way for corporate partnerships (a form of binding). Some institutions *fall short* (of the Aristotelian *performance of the best*), and are warned that *lower* standards (of awards, provision for students and academic outcomes) must not result from *expansion* of student numbers.

The most frequent term of diminution, *reduction* (in public funding per student, research funding and capital funding) is linked both to stasis (no growth, standing of awards and managing with difficulty) and to growth (e.g. increased use of technologies). It is also closely linked to euphemisms of *improvement* (in efficiency, quality and flexibility) and of *achievement* (e.g. in paragraph 64). The Report's use of euphemisms has been criticised by Frank Coffield [1996 paragraph 3 in relation to 'partnerships']. An etymology of the Latinate word *reduce* suggests a retreat yet it allows for restitution to bring back, to extend a fortification, to rescue, to accompany or to re-introduce. We can regard its instances as marking tactical retreats, in prospect of eventual returns.

> Here the Vision's resort to words of mainly Anglo-Norse roots—*fall, lower, break, down*—may suggest some discomfort at mention of decline and fall, in contrast to the higher-flown Latinate terms of *progress* and *improvement*. At least, this suggests a preference for upbeat, officially reassuring, Latinate phrases in the Vision's text.

Higher education, society and the state

In the previous sections, we have addressed certain interplays starkly: *freedom* in contrast to *coercion*, and *progress* and *advance* in contrast to *stasis* and *decline*. That polar approach may over-dramatise the potentials of the text, and overlook subtler influences and inflections at work within it. This section attempts a more nuanced reading of what the text has to say (perhaps involuntarily has to say, or avoids saying explicitly), when it articulates notions of *higher education* with those of *society* and *the state*. In the imaginary world that the Committee conjures up to convey its messages, these notions are structured in a dense network of relations, as we noted in previous chapters. Here we shall attend to the mediating functions that those relations appear to serve, such as shaping, informing and influencing rather than exerting the mode of outright command and control that braces a centrally planned and directed economy or power structure. We no longer take the purport of the Vision at face value, nor pretend to be surprised—as if to entrap it or catch it out—when its desired unity appears to fracture asunder. What emerges is a grand interplay between the rhetoric of unity and accord on the one hand, and a hierarchy of influence and control on the other.

The constitutive interplays here, cutting across the text, mainly promote either parity (within a social compact) or hierarchy; yet a few seem tensely balanced across that divide of collusion and control. Since we are dealing with the overt crux of relations between *higher education* and (*the learning*) *society*, with the state as its surrogate and muse, we shall proceed circumspectly. If we were first to survey grand themes of our choosing, we might easily spiral away from the text of the Vision. Instead we start to analyse particular terms and root words that construe relations among *higher education, society* and *the state* in quite obvious ways. A balance, or rather imbalance, of interests emerges between social orders based respectively on *hierarchy* and *compact*. We note in passing the emphatic and figural manner by which the text promotes each of those orders.

The outcome is both suggestive in itself and conducive to more problematic analyses at the level of selected themes, or more precisely of terms composed into themes. These yield a balance of interests yet that balance is complicated with several hybrid or distinctly intertwined findings.

> Aside on procedure: Particular associations consist of pairs of terms such as *society* with *civilised*. It is possible, but rare, for a third term (or more) to occur in association with both terms of such a pair. More usually, a third term is associated with one term of a pair. Later we will run indirect associations together so as to 'read off' an implicit affirmation. Here, at the particular level, we only run together the terms closely associated with a given term, to generate tentative inferences.

The terms we now summon to testify to the schism of compact and hierarchy are: *society, civilised/citizen, contribute, achieve, demand, give, take,*

govern, invest and *respond*. Some are more specific to relations of higher education, society and the state than others; yet their appearances may be deceptive, as we shall see with *give* and *take*. (The latter are treated as distinct terms rather than within the stock phrase of reciprocal tolerance: *give-and-take*.) We start with those terms that affirm and inform a social compact among peers in participation: *society, civilised, citizen* and *contribute*. Running these together, we encounter a clear message: *a civilised person, or citizen, is one who contributes to society*. Conversely, since no direction or causality imposes itself here: *society is that which contributes to a civilised person or citizen*.

> Another aside on procedure: Associations are not commutative. In this example, even if *society* occurs most often close to *civilised*, *civilised* might most often occur close to another term.

When we look for the closest associations of *society*, we are not surprised to find *civilised* (as in *civilised society*) and *learning* (as in *the*—or *a*—*learning society*). (paragraph 2 with its heading, 8, etc.) Associated with *civilised* and *citizen* we note *society* and *democratic*; plus *wellbeing, culture, values* and *inclusive*. By running these associations together, we may simply infer that *the values and culture of a civilised, democratic society are inclusive of the wellbeing of its citizens*. Indeed, that message might emerge logically from a few choice paragraphs involving those terms (e.g. 5, 8, 21 and 23), if we were analysing the logic of the text. Equally, the logic might contradict the tentative inferences we draw by association of repeated terms. *Contribution* clearly forms a vital part of a compact, by way of communal *help* and *support* among parties. (OHD: to pay, give, supply; Cassell: *contribuo* to give, unite; and *tribuo*, to annex, concede) It can convey *giving, helping to bring about* and agreeable *distribution*. In the text, it is most closely associated with *higher education* in regard to *development, cultural life, support,* and *participation*. These associations confirm the inclusive, cohesive and progressive strands of the envisaged social compact.

We now turn to some more hierarchical terms, or more precisely, to terms whose associations reflect a stratifying mission within the text. These look promising: *achieve, demand, give, take, govern, invest, respond* and *society*. *Achieve* yields a hierarchical structure running from the government at the top, through governing bodies, higher education institutions, staff (*professional* and *new*), to individuals (including *students* and *young people*). The variants of *govern* (i.e. *govern, government* and *governance*) apply to agencies, organisations and institutions. These seek to arrange a *body* with its self; that is, to establish identity between corporation and public persona.

As to *responsibility*, we find a strong association with *demand* and *need*, especially for *teaching*. *Demand*, in turn, links with *require* and *determine*, to *grow* and *expand*, to *meet* and to *inform*; especially with regard to *culture*. The tone is not wholly dirigiste (controlling), however, in that a form of protective drapery, *invest*, (OHD: to clothe; Cassell: *vestis* a garment) is most closely associated with *higher education, individuals, society* and *infrastructures*. Likewise, *under-investment* is deplored. The words *give* and *take* are deployed by way of determining priorities and scopes, and of taking place; especially toward effecting various *reductions*. Thus actions of *investment* and of *give* and *take* are treated as matters vital to hierarchical ordering and control.

Amongst these terms, we note that those promoting the Vision's overt message of parity in a social compact are outweighed in number and clarity (as with *achieve*) by those of hierarchising purport. Before we pass on to consider the thematic terms, we may reflect on whether this demonstrates anything more than the effect of a certain choice of terms in an available discourse from the outset of

the Inquiry. Indeed it does, as the text adopts the language of the Report's Terms of Reference; yet the particular terms were chosen here for their promise to articulate higher education with society and the state. They have done so through their associations in the text without guarantee as to where those might lead. We need to bear in mind this explorative basis of reckoning as we assess some thematic associations in the rest of this section.

The thematic expressions seem more disparate than the particular terms we noted above, so the spread of readings they provide may warrant some confidence in our readings. Yet we should note that each theme is as synthetic as was the choice of particular terms. For instance, terms deemed to conjure a temporal context comprise: *while, during, year, decade, no longer, the time has come, since* and *by* (as in: *by* a particular calendar year). These terms are found in paragraphs 1, 13 etc; excluding: *full-* and *part-time, sometimes, while* in the sense of 'whereas', and relative periods e.g. students' first *years*. The context promotes a notion of *expanded higher education* above all else. Whilst that may seem hierarchical, it lays the ground for the text's social compact by seeking participation by *young people, institutions* and *staff*.

We may likewise attend to an inventory of stock phrases, of which there are many—depending on what we regard as a stock phrase. (There are over 30 stock phrases, such as: *growth and regeneration, culture and citizenship*, and *research and development*.) These especially articulate notions of *society, higher education, research, learning* and *teaching*; i.e. components and activities within the scope of the social compact. An analysis (across paragraphs 2, 8 etc.) of the theme of *purposes of higher education in respect of the learning society* promotes higher educational institutions' diverse scopes and activities toward individuals, UK society and humanity in general. Again that seems to impose a hierarchy, yet its primary thrust is toward participation in the social compact, even while it leaves the standing of non-UK individuals and collective humanity undefined in a vague aura of goodwill and wellbeing. So far, it has been plausible to construe these thematic terms as promoting relations based on a compact among peers. However, each such reading was precarious in that it might easily flip into a more hierarchical construct. The next few thematic terms are construed as favouring hierarchical relations, even as they are haunted with potential outbreaks of parity.

Paragraphs selected as assigning functions to higher education in respect of society (paragraphs 2, 3 etc.) bespeak of a desire to *enable* (and *encourage* and *inspire*) *society* in respect of the *new* (*capabilities* and *technology*) in a *world* context (*class, store, practice*). That subscribes to several hierarchies (social, global, innovative and technological). Yet its means of accomplishment involves distributed agency and consent—or at least, delegation and motivation. When we examine the text's mentions of *state* and *government*, those means are confirmed and made more explicit: *encourage* (again, to motivate), *establish, priority, arrangements* (so as to delegate and direct); *fund* (to enable); and *review* (to ensure compliance). (paragraphs 2, 3 etc.) Such foregrounding of authority fits well with the text's favoured metaphors of vision: especially *review* as above, and *provision*; also *see, seek, expect, clear, respect,* and *recognise*. These figures of clarity and regard are most closely associated with terms which, in a context of *provision* and *review*, mandate that *higher education should review its quality of provision for individual students' needs*. This synthetic (run-together) remit conveys much of the sense of regard (or looking-toward) in the figural terms *expect, respect* and *recognise*.

These terms may belong as easily in a compact as in a hierarchy, depending on whether they are reciprocated; yet the associated *should*-ness tends to frame them in a hierarchical order. We can confirm that tendency through the pattern of verbs. The most favoured past tenses and participles bear out a stance of esteem

(*recognised, advanced*) within relations of establishment and ordering (*required, based, funded*). Thus we can construe some themes of standing and ordering as distinctly hierarchical, at least in their framing of relations among higher education, society and the state.

Another set of themes yields distinctly mixed allegiances, so to speak, between the orders of hierarchy and compact. These emerge from consideration of what the Vision privileges and approves, what it emphasises and what appears broadly socio-cultural, as follows. The Vision commends many objects directly by attribution of qualities: *full, beneficial, strong, quality, enable, immediate,* and *encourage*. It also draws favourable comparisons: *better/best, greater, much/more/most*, and it emphasises identity: *each* and *particular*. The most favoured objects can be arranged with distinct orientations: hierarchically into a mission concerned with *higher education's effectiveness toward students*, and compactively into an organic mode of operation: *institutions grow through collaboration for life*. (The analysis that yielded the terms in these strings drew on paragraphs and recommendations throughout NCIHE 1997.) However, the elements may be just as well related across these strings as within them, for instance by pairing: *higher education—institutions, growth—effect* and *student—life*.

This mesh of relations provides our first example of a thematic term that is intimately intertwined with hierarchical and compactive associations. A second thematic term overlaps somewhat with the previous one, by gathering emphases from the text whether these involve evaluations or not. (This analysis ranged across the sample report for associations of: *very, most, entire, each, every, highest,* (*not*) *just, at least, enormous* and *greater*; plus those for terms of immediacy, urgency, particularity and double negativity.) The favourite compactive elements may be synthesised into this string: *each party co-ordinates toward collective, organisational ends*. The more hierarchical terms are concerned with *establishing effectiveness, targeting* and *standardising*, and with consequent failure or success. Together, these elements tend to reinforce a quantitative and evaluative worldview. Even as that suggests a controlling outlook, its scope is so prevalent as to commend it for all parties to a compact; that is, as the desired ethos for an *effective* hegemony or collective consciousness yet to be *established*.

The third thematic analysis to yield mixed orientations concerns terms that broadly signify socio-cultural matters. (paragraphs 2, 3 etc.) In a hierarchical domain, these are most often associated with public funding, expenditure and spending plans, i.e. with financial measures. Those with compactive associations cluster around *creation of a learning society*, framed by a diffuse notion of a *democratic, civilised, inclusive* and *just society*. Whether a *learning society* is contingent on, brings about, or is otherwise correlated with these further attributes of an ideal society is not apparent from the Vision's text. Yet a hierarchical move seems to take place here, in which the government delegates to higher education the role of an agent for realising the composite vision of *the learning society* • (in/of) *a democratic* etc. *society*. On the other hand, the ideal state of affairs and the manner of bringing it about both appear to involve willing partnership, i.e. a voluntary agreement among peers. Thus the articulation of higher education and society with the state, like the previous section's aporia of *progress* • *stasis / decline*, oscillates between the social arrangements of *freedom* and *coercion*.

Presence and distance

The analyses thus far have played along with the Vision's implicit self-presentation in a condition of unanimity (being of one mind) and eventuality (occurring at one time or in a single duration). This next analysis calls the bluff, so to speak, of the *presence* that the Vision presents. This analysis lightly engages an allegory of a visit to a performance or seance, to stage the text's interplay of *presence* and *distance*. If we could merge with the Vision, our senses would take in, and our melded mind would construe, its scene and its perspective. The main obstacle to doing so is our impression of being in another time and place. We would need some kind of seance to summon the animus that we imagine was lost on publication of the text. However, our knowledge of our rootedness may be an illusion emanating from our anxiety to inhabit (cf. the Greek notion of *chora*, the place where a thing properly belongs, as used in J Derrida's Villanova talk [1996]). The Vision may have already dreamed a place for us so that we may slip into its dream without the least disturbance.

> Aside: The rigmarole here seeks to unsettle a facile view that we know precisely *when*, *where* and *with a view to what* the Dearing Report came about. The patter seeks to engage us in a practice of *deixis*, i.e. inference about 'the situation in which an utterance is made'. (C. Baldick 1990)

For a fleeting yet timeless moment, we may then share its presence so as to recall on our safe return—for this must be ventured not assured—the Vision's senses of what 'is' in its view *near* and *far*, *now*, *recent* and *soon*.

> Aside: The device of dreaming out of time, as it were, attends Captain Cat's recollection of the fates of his shipmates in Dylan Thomas's [1954] 'play for voices', Under Milk Wood....

'What can we *see* and *hear*?', we may ask in our calm confusion: 'What can we *reach* and *touch*, *recall* and *anticipate*?' We will solicit insights to the Vision's situation by noting its usage of such commonplace terms as *this/that*, *we/our*, *you*, *its*, *them/their*, *now/recent*, *here*, *clear*, *immediate* and expressions of solidarity and urgency. We should not do so with boldness, or even circumspectly in the manner of a positive scientism, for after all this is make-believe, and quite insubstantial. Rather we will approach the text hesitantly, with faltering gait and gaze averted, as guests who may not be properly invited to a performance or whose currency may be unwelcome.

Rather than salute our hosts with an exchange of identities—or crassly ask 'Who are *you*?'—we submit such existential requests as 'Who is *here*?', thus politely ignoring eventualities of absence, departure or arrival. Even 'Who is *here*?' encodes deictic (situation-dependent) assumptions, to do with agency, topology and attribution of *presence* and *personality*. We avoid such complex questions as would arouse the logical structure that guards the integrity of the Vision's text against improper readings.

> Aside: Such a notional interplay of *presence and absence* may seem out of fashion in terms of a post-human schema of patterns of information [e.g. in Kroker & Kroker 1999]. Here we approach the Vision by way of a humanistic perspective so as enjoin rather than disturb its reverie.

We first ask 'Who is *here*?'. In the text, such presence is marked by the first person plural: *we, us* and *our*. These refer frequently to the Committee and occasionally to the United Kingdom (abbreviated in all but the first instance, paragraph 2, as the 'UK'). The identity of the Committee is so guardedly evident, taken-for-granted, over-determined and thus problematic for our manner of reading that we leave it aside, to embrace instead the Vision's notion of a *United Kingdom* and whatever that might entail. (paragraphs 8, 47, 49 and 55) The salient features of the envisaged *UK* would mainly comprise *a democratic civilisation* with *a system of higher education*. The latter would be *built from established practice,* provide *students* with *learning* of *high quality* and *respected awards*. In that climate of esteem, the *universities* would continue to *attract funding for research*.

The Vision resolves many concerns of its *present* situation: those of *public service* and *public spending plans; representative bodies* and *funding bodies, participation* in *higher education,* and *pay and conditions of service* for its *staff*. When we ask: 'What is *this*?'—i.e. what is to hand among the Committee's concerns—we encounter diverse terms for ends and means, while *reductions, issues* and overly *close focus* are to be superseded. As priorities for *inclusion*, we find *professional standards, local and regional support,* and matters of *admission* and *curriculum*. (paragraphs 1, 7 etc.) Thus within the imagined *UK*, public bodies attend to a chain of distribution of opportunity, resources (to sustain access to opportunity) and processes of review to ensure their standing. None of this synthetic fabric seems to be at odds with the superficial purport of the text, so we can ask: 'What will have been *realised*?' The results are again unsurprising, in terms of *aspiration, objective* and *full potential* (through a *compact*, depending on a *change in values*, and *limited* to those groups or purposes that can *demonstrate need*).

> Aside: Here we allow signifiers to 'float' across notions with which we are by now familiar, since articulation with signified concepts would disrupt the soothing affect of our recollections.

We may inquire: 'Who *takes part*?' (i.e. *participates*). (paragraphs 27-30, 51 etc.) *Young people* feature most strongly in a *strategically widened UK higher education* system, *determined* by *demand*, and *providing* for hitherto *under-represented groups*. When we ask: 'What is *particular*?', (paras, 28, 36 etc.) we find a range of evaluative measures such as *target figure, code of practice, threshold standard, qualification, range* and *level*. This particularity serves exhortation and measurement, including self-regulation. If we ask: 'What is *required*?' (paragraphs 2, 5 etc.) the main measures involve *funding* (*additional expenditure* and *reductions*) and again, *standards*. Likewise the query, 'What is most *opportune*?' yields potentials in higher education, again regarding *participation* therein. (paragraphs 4, 12 etc.) Although these associations can hardly surprise us, they serve to attune us to the Vision's sense of its nearest objects.

Elevating our gaze, as it were, we may inquire after more distant objects in view. Just as we opened with the query 'Who is *here*?', we now ask: 'Who is *there*?' This analysis considers pronouns of the third person throughout the sample text. The reply concerns *higher education* in terms of *institutions* and *students*. We note that the text attributes *selves* to certain organisational entities: *higher education* as a whole, *institutions of higher education* and of *further education,* and *nations*.

> Aside: This focus on *selves—itself, themselves*—seeks marks of importance other than the frequency with which words or phrases are mentioned.

Next we ask, 'What is *needed*?', or perhaps in the fullness of the Vision: 'Who is no longer in *need*?'. (paragraphs 4, 5 etc.) The needs most often addressed are those of the *nation* or the *UK, higher education, research* and *students*. These are associated with outcomes: *access, demonstrate, develop, diverse, expand*. Thus a multiplicity of needs will be shown to have been resolved through growth, opening and incremental change.

In the matter of ends and means, we may ask: 'What is *that*?', to elicit objects in view at some distance. (paragraphs 5, 10 etc.) Across *two decades* these include *grown demand, young people's* punctual *entry to higher education,* coded *expectations, a harnessed technological infrastructure* and *gathered evidence*. We pursue the latter with: 'What is *evident?*' (paragraphs 8, 10 etc.) The response partly reinforces the demonstrative element we encountered in the overcoming of need: *demand, gather, show, see, respect, advance* and *advantage* (OHD: toward a better position). It adds an element of offering: *giving, suggest* and *support*.

Thus the gift is present in reciprocal senses: both seen to be provided and provided to be seen; and the theatrical whisper is amplified on stage. In this mode of reverie, motives, causes and effects are dissolved in phenomenal happening. In the play of re-presentation, that which is sensed at a distance is familiar, with a quality of *given*-ness.

Hence we may ask: 'What is *recognised*?' (paragraphs 9, 10 etc.) We receive a polyvocal reply. One voice (as it were) bespeaks of community: a recognised *bond,* with *contribution,* socially representative *participation, obligation* in a *partnership* of *interdependent participants,* and *costs shared among beneficiaries*. Another attests to a meritocratic outlook: *standards of award for achievement* and *recognised staff* (or a *pool of academic staff*) organised in *levels* of an *economy* or *framework,* impressed with *significant force*. This echoes the interplay of *compact* and *hierarchy* we examined earlier, yet spans it with a common basis of *recognition*. Since even distant objects in play are recognisable, we may ask: 'What is *reflected*?' (paragraphs 7 & 8) Not much comes back, only *vision* and *diversity*; a nominal *vision* reflected in a title and *diversity* reflected in its arrangements. Any further reflection on our part might be divisive of a represented order (Cassell: *divido* to separate, adorn or destroy) and thus lead to a damaging separation of views; so we leave it at that.

We settle the Vision into its preferred mode of ordered unity and perspective by inquiring after objects that appear both near and distant in its text. Thus we ask: 'What is *all*?' i.e. that which is comprised and (made) organic and whole by the Vision. (paragraphs 5, 7 etc.) The reply nominates *institutions* and *people*. The institutions are constituted in themselves and in terms of their performance, programmes, public funding and purposes of research. The people variously include higher educational *staff*, especially *permanent* staff; *people* of all ages and levels of learning, such as *students*; and people who *helped* with the Committee's task. Regarding higher education as a whole, we ask: 'What is *within* and *outside*?' (paragraphs 11, 29 and 42) The Committee's helpers are again visible, together with the *causes of under-representation* and *understanding of a framework of qualifications*.

Then we press on with: 'What is *between*?' so as to elicit objects *inter*-spersed in the Vision. (paragraphs 2, 9 etc.) Across the associations of *international, interdependence, interdisciplinary* and *interests,* we note that the *UK, the state* and the *national, higher educational institutions* are predominant. They occupy positions of supreme *between*-ness, in terms of *standing* and the *challenge* of *acceptability* by *world standards*. However, the *interests* are firmly placed to *ensure, extend* and *encourage* a movement of *bringing partnership* for *effectiveness*. As this attenuated play of *presence* and *distance* seems about to

dissolve, we hastily ask: 'What appears in *levels*?'—seeking to glimpse a vertical structure. (paragraphs 3, 17 etc.) The diverse reply particularly mentions *student support*, *participation*, *funding*, and *qualifications* as objects stratified within frameworks or quanta. However, the strength of response is diminishing so we should take our leave of this linguistic play on the Vision.

We hastily call for items that may have been left out. Our clamour only conveys 'What ... *about* ...?', yet that proves sufficient to evoke a response. From the limited repertoire, the unseen cast or medium rallies for a final encore on the theme of *about*-ness (OHD: associated with *on the move, astir, in action, in rotation, in connection with*) to sum up the event we have just witnessed or imagined. (paragraphs 1, 5 etc.) It begins with the Vision's favourite note of *clarity* (regarding *mission* and *status*); it voices prescriptive *concerns* with *standards* and *arrangements*; it makes *recommendations* for *infrastructure* and *achievement*; and calls for advertisement of *information* as to *higher educational services* on offer. Even as the curtain descends and the lights come up, *about* is revisiting notions of *higher education* as a *business*; *strategic decisions* about *research funding*, and how to *exploit technology*.

We head for the exits with these imaginary patterns and rhythms of the Vision's play of *presence • distance* disporting themselves about us. (But did this imaginary event nudge or budge or tickle us, and did its images disturb us?) [cf. Ronald Barnett 2000 p.159:]

> The total pedagogical environment of the lecture hall is a safe environment. The student watches a performance and is not obliged to engage with it. It is like watching a horror film: one knows that, however disturbing it is at the time, soon the lights will go on and its fictionality can be embraced with nothing much dislodged.

Interplays without end

This chapter has experimented with the Vision's text by examining the frequencies and apparent associations-by-proximity of words and phrases in it. The text sustained four prominent, aporetic associations of ideas:

freedom • coercion

progress • stasis and *decline*

higher education • society and *the state*

presence • distance.

In each case, the analysis-cum-synthesis of linguistic connotations arrived at a condition of impasse (aporia) in which the text seemed divided against itself and paralysed even as it promoted a programme of reforms of higher education for the UK. There was a commentary running through this chapter—in embedded or boxed asides—that reflected on its own working and the liberties it took to stage its interplays. It was continually tugging and kneading, so to speak, at the Vision's content. It worked through lexical obscurities, sometimes with little to show for its efforts. These four were the first and most exploratory of such exercises.

At that point in the research, the exercise of *recordance* (analysis-plus-synthesis: re-collection and remembrance) got into its stride and produced a further series of short aporetic readings of the Vision's text:

Table 8 - Further aporetic interplays

academic • vocational studies
access, participate • under-represent
agency • passivity
clarity, vision • confusion
collaborate • compete, exploit
develop • stifle
grounding • conception
health and bodily wellbeing • need of support
intellect • personality
knowledge • technology and skill
mass • élite
quantity • quality
rationality, reason • belief, profession
region • UK-nation • world
teach • learn and study
uniformity • difference and diversity

That set of readings left numerous interplays unexplored but established a pattern for further linguistic inquiry. The practised interplays in the second list above are not elaborated on here precisely because they seem too confident of what they are about. Too mechanistic by half, you see. They had to be expelled for conformity; for no longer attending the *to-come* (*l'avenir*) that might never come; for becoming finished goods. They looked on the text with a *sclerophthalmic* (OED: hard-eyed, pained; cf. J Derrida 1984a) gaze, rather than partaking of the uncertainties of the Vision. They were clinically brief, precise and purposeful, so they lack the probing, 'edgy' quality that marks the four earlier and more varied explorations included in this chapter.

As we noted in chapter 4, *Approach*, the words *deconstruct* and *aporia* are obliged to remain almost undecideable. That applies even more to practices or passages that claim to exemplify them. As a common trait, we can expect such pieces to seek out ways of destabilising the given (approved, accustomed or largely unquestioned) meaning of a text. The pursuit of radical indeterminacy does not sit comfortably with the bureaucratic discourse of standards and results, despite deconstruction's craving for examples of factual, yet rhetorical, discourse on which to practise. Its appetite drives us toward whatever comes before the name, before the concept and before recognition in the world.

6 Implications

> 1 IN the School of Political Projectors I was but ill entertained, the Professors appearing in my Judgment wholly out of their Senses, which is a Scene that never fails to make me melancholy. These unhappy People were proposing Schemes for persuading Monarchs to chuse Favourites upon the Score of their Wisdom, Capacity and Virtue; of teaching Ministers to consult the Publick Good; or rewarding Merit, great Abilities and eminent Services; of instructing Princes to know their true Interest by placing it on the same Foundation with that of their People; Of chusing for Employments Persons qualified to exercise them; with many other wild impossible Chimaeras, that never entred before into the heart of Man to conceive, and confirmed in me the old Observation, that there is nothing so extravagant and irrational which some Philosophers have not maintained for Truth.
>
> 2 BUT, however I shall so far do Justice to this Part of the Academy, as to acknowledge that all of them were not so visionary. ...
>
> [Jonathan Swift, 1726, *Gulliver's Travels* ... Part 3 ch.VI, on administration for the public good.]

This chapter ruminates on the sample text—the Vision—of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (1997). It spins out philosophical and ideological themes by treating the text as a site of departure for a series of loosely linked reveries or analyses-plus-syntheses (*recordances*).

Ideas of higher education

Here we explore a multiplicity of *truths* in which the Committee's Vision portrays relations between *higher education* and the *learning society* as an ideal of socio-cultural community. That variety unsettles any determinate reading of what the Vision is 'really about', yet it is stimulating in that it affords potentials for diverse readings. These are based on textual traces. By pursuing them, we defer any final resolution of themes. Broadly speaking, this pursuit takes place in the manner of Derrida's interpretive practice of *différance*: [C. Martindale 1993 p.2, emphasis in original]

> ... So I offer my own provisional description of history: *it is a discourse constituted by the traces produced by différance which are present in all textuality*.

With disarray in mind, we shall re-read the sample text several times from perspectives suggested in essays by Robert Young and Jacques Derrida. Situated at some discursive distance from the Committee's habitual mode of thinking, these essays will assist us to sustain a series of commentaries. These contemplate the Committee's Vision ambivalently, without attacking or defending its aspirations. The most concrete of these in its implications is the last, *The Truth of politics and the politics of Truth in the Dearing manifesto*. It does not attempt to define the key terms of the discourse(s) that it explores. Yet by implication these terms may be pursued through the source [I. Budge 1997] of the method of conceptual modelling that it adopts for its analysis.

The Vision dissolves the institutional distinctions of the university, plus parts of further education, colleges of higher education, foundation courses and processes of higher professional training into a reified activity of *higher education*. In the same move it seeks to formalise, encode and enforce these and other distinctions—as when it promotes tighter control of the awarding and rescinding of the title 'University'. A glance at a history of *the university* in particular shows it to have covered a range of institutions wide enough to encompass the Vision's *higher education* with scope to spare for most eventualities. In the face of the alleged demise and ruin (which are contemporary and recurrent themes) of *the university*, we can appreciate a succinct history of its organising ideas to guide our unruly examination of the Vision for *higher education*. Robert Young outlines a series of overlapping stages of evolution in his essay The Idea of a Chrestomathic University. (C. Baldick p.36: *chrestomathy* a collection or anthology of passages in prose or verse, often selected for purposes of literary or linguistic study.)

With cultural connotations and exemplary proponents, these ideas (or Ideas) are as follows: [R. Young in R. Rand 1992/1987, especially pp.111-2.]

Table 9 - Four truths of the university

Religious truth: cf. John Newman's 'imperial intellect', based on his Romantic, 'philosophic habit'.
The truth of reason: cf. Immanuel Kant's bid for the 'lower faculty' of philosophy to judge the other faculties.
Poetic truth as the privileged repository of culture, in England in particular; cf. Matthew Arnold's appeal to literature as a secular substitute for religion.
Political truth as the most comprehensive contemporary metalanguage of *the university*.

It is beguiling to chart a series of eras in which institutions either remained stable or evolved continually through reforms or upheavals stage by stage. Rather, we can consider these truths or traits as co-existing and imparting traces across diverse fields of learning, education and training without clear limits in time or extent.

Religion, Reason, Literature and Politics: as domains of Truth, these Ideas describe a terrain marked with pitfalls and barriers to be traversed at our peril. We need a guide lest we overlook a chasm or leap rashly to a conclusion, so we will take along a copy of Jacques Derrida's essay *The Principle of Reason: The University in the Eyes of its Pupils* [1983/4]. To be sure, the texts of Dearing and Derrida seem to address somewhat different terrains or perhaps to view similar terrains differently; yet there are sufficient points of contact, as it were, for the guidance to be useful.

An Idea of religious truth

> All that matters is that you embrace America and understand its ideals and what it's all about. Abraham Lincoln used to say that ... the test of your Americanism was how much you believed in America. Because we're like a religion really. A secular religion. [Rudy Giuliani, December 2001]

As polite strangers approaching unbidden, we choose a respectful distance from which to hail the Committee's Vision. We inquire after the divine Being or beings of the place in prospect of that Vision. We cannot well know what to expect by way of first and last things, since a missionary attitude would put our preconceptions to the fore and preclude receptive inquiry. We must behave circumspectly, for the Vision of shared commitment seems reluctant to commit itself to any absolute form of belief. Perhaps in the object-space of its cultural world, claims to belief are suspect other than by way of iconic, aesthetic display and exchange in a market of transient, economic fashion and commodified 'values'. Yet with circumspect probing—at some risk of importing categories of animism, deism and human-divine relations—we may elicit some views as to what, if anything, the Vision entails by way of belief and creed. For this purpose, we can offer to trade a few of the aporia from the previous chapter, as follows:

Table 10 - Sample aporia from *Deconstructions*

presence • distance
health and bodily wellbeing • need of support
teach • learn and study
region • UK-nation • world
rationality and reason • belief and profession.

Let us set aside elaborate religious structures of cosmology (systematic explanation of the universe) and cosmogony (how the universe was created). For the moment we avoid any thought of universal (monarchic), tribal and familial gods, and attune ourselves instead to the spirits or gods of lesser things, places and events. Such beings may yet chuckle in a forgotten rill or bite us when hammer accidentally strikes thumb. We apprehend them most directly outwith the civilised frameworks that distinguish religion from the state, business from leisure, poetry from politics, and so forth. They affect us with impulses and reminders that transcend such distinctions (*rest awhile*, *accursed object!*, *plant now*, *avoid that path*). With experience, a running commentary of prospects institutionalises itself into *omen* (token, augury, prodigy) and *taboo* (setting apart as sacred or cursed). We anticipate such moments by attending or inquiring for signs and taking necessary precautions, since a careless word or (over)sight may bring (mis)fortune. Derrida enacts this watchful, listening mode of inquiry toward his audience and the university, so as to frame (both to open upon and enclose) his essay *The Principle of Reason...* [1984a] in its first and last paragraphs:

> TODAY, how can we not speak of the university?
>
> ...
>
> Let me recall my *incipit* [beginning] and the single question that I raised at the outset: how can we not speak, today, of the university? Have I said it, or done it? Have I said how one must not speak, today, of the university? Or have I rather spoken as one should not do today, within the university? Only others can answer. Beginning with you.

The Committee's Summary Report also frames itself in reference to its reader, through proper conduct and timing; yet we are not trying to draw point-by-point comparisons between the 'Derrida' and 'Dearing' texts. Rather in keeping with the previous chapter's inquiries we quietly ask the Vision: Of what should we take most heed? Expressions that appear to compose a world-view for us as witnesses of the Vision are woven loosely into the following fictive passage:

> *We face an uncertain future. Recent need has grown beyond our means. We believe in urgent action to avert further decline and crisis. For the well-being of us all, and for what we may yet become, the young and curious should be able and willing to learn truth. We should unite to give them the best support and care in the world.*

These are not the most frequent words in the Vision, yet they seem to precede and motivate the diverse structures of volition, reasoning and exhortation that we explored in the previous chapter. Relative to the whole text, we note a high proportion of terms here that are derived from Old English. Perhaps the Vision says (or reserves to itself) what it feels mainly in structures of an English language. The imaginary passage above is more in keeping with the lyrical parts of the Vision than with its dominant tone, which is rationally instrumental and, as we noted, expressed in Latinate wording. The way the words fit together above seems more akin to a religious creed or a call to arms. The latter modes of rallying faith and commitment may seem too calculated here, yet they evoke a visceral response with immediacy and with a sense of shared emotions. In trying to articulate this expression of an emotive core of the Vision's being-in-the-world, we find that the terms resist the impersonal processes of culture and institution (such as *nation* and *education*) in its public text, and seek a more familiar mode of support. In contrast to that, the Vision urges us to abandon lesser, local gods and to take part in organised observance, in the place of or alongside an established state Religion, so to speak.

To focus our inquiry into religious traits of the Vision *in situ*, we may adopt a gloss of religion from Ed L. Miller, a source informed particularly by Judeo-Christian tradition. [1996 p.590; for brief accounts of the inherent difficulty of expressing a <u>non</u>-rational (uncanny, numinous) experience of religion as being complementary to rational orthodoxy, see his pp.331-5.]

> Religion: Usually, a set of beliefs, related rituals, and ethical principles, centered on a conception of God, divine reality, or nature; more fundamentally, the commitment (involving belief and practice) to what is conceived to be highest in worth, power, reality, meaning, etc.

This gloss promises to elicit more from the Committee's Vision than did our earlier question to it: 'Of what should we take most heed?' The terms *centred, principles, commitment, highest,* etc. seem more akin to the Vision's habitual language. However the scope of *worth, power, reality, meaning*, etc. admits of matters that might otherwise seem either to be secular or to be religious in a colloquial—yet proper—sense (e.g.: 'He collects old postcards religiously.'). Such language implies schemes to relate matters to each other, and hence implicitly to distinguish and also to dissociate: *humanity* from *nature, reality* from *ideas, principles* from *practice*, and so forth.

These conceptual structures preclude (banish) us from a world of untold, diverse experiences. Instead they give rise to idylls of remembrance for such a lost world. (OHD: *idyll* short description ... especially in rustic life; Liddell: *eidos* form, shape, figure) Yet the power of symbols, especially symbols of powerful things, is such that the old spirits and gods live on in remote, aggregated forms. In a world of organised religion, one approach to that grand scheme is opened by the question: What is treated as sacrosanct? (OHD: *sacrosanct* most sacred, inviolable; Cassell: *sanctus* ... holy, blameless.) Also: What remains forever beyond human control? (This train of thought is based on paragraph 142 of the *Conclusion* of the Committee's <u>Summary Report</u>, outside of the Vision sample.) We now put these questions to the Vision to see what it nominates as paramount in ordering the world it inhabits.

The Vision is helpful in identifying supremely important *beings*, including powerful forces and their personified attributes. These beings are variously treated: eulogised, depended on for wellbeing and appealed or complained to for support; however their authority is not to be challenged. Each being carries potentials for benefit and harm, so they must always be spoken of and approached circumspectly. Even to mention one is to convey an axiomatic sense of given-ness; such forces are not just construed as we go along.

The wildest mixture of danger and appeal resides in *global forces*, for these exceed the house-rules (economies) of any familiar gods. They are unpredictable, implacable and unbiddable: unresponsive to human threats or entreaties. We cannot even name them with long-term certainty—or perhaps at all, on grounds of provocation—yet they are vital to the wellbeing of this island-bound (insular) *nation*. The *UK* or *nation* (Cassell: *nascor / gnascor / natus sum* to be born, ... to spring forth; *natus* born, fitted by nature for ...) constitutes a singular entity, a pre-existent whole with which the 'we' of the Vision's text can identify without reservation. It mediates in the cosmos between 'we/us' and the 'world'. It determines the being and fate of *regions*. Whilst it is named, the name is already given and timeless, not bestowed or negotiable. Born in a mythical time, this *nation* is thus fitted by nature for its rightful role among all nations.

> Aside: We shall look more abstractly in chapter 7 *Disseminations* at the way the Committee construes institutions as objective beings.

And yet, and yet: the Vision situates 'us' in a time out of kilter and yearns for a condition of harmony. We may liken the latter to the Ancient Egyptian ideal of *Maat*. [David O'Connor quoted in Joyce Tyldesley 1996 pp.8-9: 'all being right with the world'; the daughter/eye of Ra; truth and justice; in compound words: uprightness and lightness, the writing-quill etc.] This harmony resides in a yet-to-be-perfect unity, in the nation's advent (becoming) or perhaps its restoration to its rightful destiny. (Renewal is a recurrent theme across the Committee's set of Reports.) In the grand setting of the UK-nation among global forces, as noted in the previous chapter, the Vision plays out the aporia of *freedom • coercion*. The sovereign nation strives to sustain its freedom of action in the midst of wild forces that would curtail or destroy that freedom. Moreover, those forces must be captured and mastered (harnessed) into its service. Such external forces cannot be tamed by diplomatic—perhaps reasonable, literary or political—means to yield a world-wide condition of harmony; that is just not in prospect. Rather, the most respite for which this nation can hope is that of collusion among healthy, strong nations (economically 'advanced', not needful of support) in pursuit of shared advantage over the rest. In the interplay of *agency • passivity*, passivity is simply not an option. Advanced nations must continue to *develop* and *progress* or be constrained into stasis and decline. These interplays, in the Vision, should determine the proper relations of *higher education* to the UK-nation's *society*.

Prowess consists both in sustaining alliances and in outdoing other contestants, in the interplay of *collaboration • competition* and *exploitation*. This interplay is not to be conducted through the subtle ways of political diplomacy, but by heady display of victories and potentialities to spare. Higher education is called to render its national service in several respects. As a first duty, Western expertise—especially that arising from research in both science and technology—must be lauded and upheld as paramount. The higher education system is enjoined to ensure that the UK's intellectual reputation rides above the fray. Vicariously, that national glory must reflect *kudos* on the rest of the UK's society; or at least, divert attention from any shortfalls of progress or prowess. (Liddell: *kudos* glory, renown, especially in war; also applied to a single person, like *decus*, Cassell: that which adorns or beautifies) Thus people inside and outside of the

UK's society—ideally coterminous with the UK-nation—may take heart from its intellectual prowess.

Derrida expresses such a structure of admiration in a society as follows: '... with the relative autonomy of a technical apparatus ... this artefact that is the university has *reflected society* only in giving it the chance for ... *dissociation*.' [J. Derrida 1984a p.26, original emphasis] In the simultaneous play of *presence • distance* in the global arena, such a society is thus enabled to regard itself as if from a bystander's viewpoint, rather than very partially from a point inside its society or from a distance that would diminish the splendid prospect.

A second national duty of higher education is that of displaying practical prowess in the form of exemplary teaching and learning, technologised so as to reinforce and blend into the display of prowess in research. However, that duty is mainly directed toward bringing about the *learning society*. In the interplay of *teach • learn-and-study*, a unified practice of teaching and learning is called on to be versatile across diverse ends and means of education. That is where it has to engage with the real, not-for-show struggle of *progress • stasis / decline*. The criterion for success here is the extent of popular *participation*. Ideally, the whole of society should congregate to take part in a national service, in and for the state of communal wellbeing.

Thirdly, in particular, higher education should arouse *curiosity*, not just toward itself but by instilling a faculty of wonder as a stimulus to fruitful inquiry. That is the kind of curiosity to which Derrida draws our attention, as advocated at the start of Aristotle's (posthumously gathered) book of the *Metaphysics*: 'All men, by nature, have the desire to find out.' [J. Derrida 1984a p.6; he is rendering section 980a at the start of *Book Alpha*; cf.: 'By nature, all men long to know.' in HC Lawson-Tancred 1998 p.4.] We might translate this snippet of Aristotle's lecture notes now (granted that historically his students would be male, though the saying can be read in an ungendered manner): 'Everyone, naturally, wishes to find things out.' This sentiment might seem to be at odds with the Vision's general lauding of useful activity, yet there is an insistent strand of yearning in the Vision for 'knowledge and understanding for its own sake' (paragraph 23) and 'culture for its own sake' (paragraph 8). That yearning is applied to objects that are both singular and apparently local ('human' and 'the world store') and plural and widespread (as with skills, among students and people in general).

In the Vision's overcoming of distinctions of *mass • élite* and *quantity • quality*, plus its linking of youth with curiosity, we may sense the energy and excitement (OHD: *enthusiast* a visionary; from *entheos*, Liddell: divine frenzy, possession) that such dedicated higher education is bound to generate.

Fourthly, that energy is deployed to embrace *change* in the direction of *excellence* (rather than energetically upholding a *status quo*).

Fifthly, that which is already excellent is to be cherished, in that culture is to be *fostered* (OED: fed, guarded, indulged) 'for its own sake'.

We could continue to juggle these dutiful *beings* or services to the nation and to test their importance against other candidates for supremacy. That would however occlude a necessary effect of the symbolic recognition they demand in organised religion: stratification and division of society along cultural lines. (Cassell: *colo, colui, cultum* to till the ground, ... to honour, reverence, court.) We shall consider *culture* before we move on to the Truth of Reason.

We round off this reverie on the truth of religion with a brief reminder of the functions that the Vision assigns to higher education in regard to society, as it is

idealised in the phrase *the learning society*. Its metaphysics of higher education mimics an organised religion, albeit with niches for monastic or personal devotion. The ideal has to maintain an overall unity that embraces diversity in a manner that cannot threaten the organic whole. Thus many principles (as symbolic spaces for idealised practices) may be enshrined or fostered at a moment of time, as it were, regardless of whether they may be incompatible and incommensurable. The architecture of higher education would include a seminary (to effect transition between the familiar and disciplinary contexts), a space of schooling (in which to teach) and a gymnasium of character-building (for moral yet humanistic ends). There would be a place for preparation for worldly work (vocational training, e.g. for medicine), a portal to industry (for nurture of enterprise), a niche to scholarship (to sustain the academic and professional archives) and a factory of knowledge (for pragmatic research). For ceremonies and assemblies, higher education would afford an office of qualification (to distribute prizes), and a hall of fame (variously to garner, invent and display symbols of institutional kudos).

An Idea of the Truth of reason

The university of reason

The university gazes knowingly upon the manifest world. It has its reasons. These are enshrined in the modes of knowing of its academic disciplines or faculties. They are informed by the schemes of concepts by which academics describe what they see. Taken together, the schemes of knowing do not form a simple, self-consistent set of rules for 'reading off' the world beyond the academy. Rather they are proved through, yet remain subject to, the most rigorous disputations. These demand reasons for any particular point of view and the explanations by which it construes the institution's domain of reality. Specific philosophies and practices thus reside and have their being in the academic disciplines.

Occasionally, a dispute or grounding for an entire body of knowledge may be resolved through empirical evidence, or fall into abeyance in the sedimentary domain of historical knowledge (yet to be revived, perhaps, through historical research). Even then, new disputes are bound to arise in the historical treatment of a relegated body of knowledge, or rather of the traces that survive its passing from the world of current theory and practice into the custody of scholarship and teaching. In an age of secular reason, research keeps watch in the place of theology and teaching takes the public place of ministry. Scholarship, coming after the study of divinity, can guard both research and teaching, the sanctum and the halls, to observe the ritual openings toward the horizon of knowledge.

However, the modern university does not quite claim a monopoly of knowledge, nor does any one institution of higher learning succeed in capturing the contents of all domains of knowledge. Learned societies, for instance, act as custodians of standards of competence in their fields. Yet the latest academic research counts as a trump card, as it were, in settling disputes as to what is reasonable by way of theory (knowledge) and hence sound practice (skills). When an apparently new kind of knowledge or skill arises unannounced, the university's steadfast gaze may overlook it until such time as there is renown or other advantage to be had by appropriating that advance in thinking or doing to its public body of expertise. The university thus provides not only a body of

knowledges but supplies sets of criteria by which candidates for admission to that corpus of knowledge may be judged reasonable and accepted on reasonable grounds. Parts of the corpus that have been superseded beyond reasonable doubt—or their effectiveness disproven in practice—may be discarded or rather (as we noted above) relegated to historian custody. There they are cherished as the archives of past modes and standards of knowing.

Research, on the other hand, awaits the *to-come*. In Derrida's words (in translation), the Western university may exercise—if by vigilance we may keep both memory and the chance—:

> ... the fidelity of a guardian faithful enough to want to keep even the chance of a future, in other words the singular responsibility of what he *[sic]* does not have and of what is not yet. Neither in his keeping nor in his purview.

In that vigil beyond its particular time and place, the university serves as the jealous red eye of enlightened reason. Its rays reach out as the cynosure (centre of attention, tail) to adherents of true reason and serve a dire warning to miscreants (unbelievers) and makers of mischief (bad happenings, arch satire).

> Aside: These etymologies of *cynosure, miscreant* and *mischief* are taken from the OHD. Note the navigational figure of *cynosure*: a dog's tail, hence a name of the constellation containing the pole-star of the northern hemisphere.

The Committee's reasonable script

The notions of reason and rationality, like truth and discourse, are so overlaid with meanings as to hamper any sensible discussion. (For short histories of rational/reason, discourse and truth in rhetoric, see the work of Raymond Williams [1988 pp.252-6]; also Paul A. Bové and Stanley Fish in Lentricchia *et al.* [1995 pp.50-65 and 203-222].) Yet here we need to make sense of texts that employ or demand particular concepts of these terms. As a bridge into Derrida's *The Principle of Reason* ... [1984a], let us turn to Immanuel Kant's essay on *The Philosophy Faculty versus the Theology Faculty* [in his 1979/1798 book The Conflict of the Faculties]. In the Appendix to that chapter, Kant argues a case for resorting to philosophical principles of interpretation, as dictated by reason, 'when conflict arises about the sense of a scriptural text'. [I. Kant 1979 p.65] We can apply attributes of a notion of scripture to the Committee's Report in several ways. These include: that which is written to be examined and acted upon (script) and that which configures a linked history with a Utopian vision (pre-scribed, destined). There is also that which—when compiled and authorised by appropriate councils and committees, often for each other—stands as given truth.

The structure of the script conforms to the tradition of a book of books by gathering up diverse and customary lore, evidence and exhortation. If an earlier book of books presents itself for translation into the place of the new address, a council of savants can cap it by proclaiming a fresh start. Such a point of radical departure—as in the case of the Committee's Report—is marked by its own act of publication. The coincidence is hardly accidental, since the event emerges from the performative deed. The act of publication is not an end in itself, only the chief end of its authority. The revelation only briefly serves to confirm the Report's calling. The event comes only to be overtaken by swift action to judge, then to implement or supplant, its proposals so as to fulfil the social ends for which it was called into being by the Government.

The Vision's noblest ideal is that of improving people's lives through higher education, in a context of national wellbeing. The principal means to that end consist in co-ordinated actions by the Government and by institutional partners of the Government. The co-ordination and (where necessary) enforcement of those actions incurs—as we have seen—a secondary apparatus of agencies, standards and procedures. However, the Vision's emphasis is on pursuit of actions toward demonstrable improvements, both material and cultural, according to a flexible timetable of execution. The apparatus appears to dominate almost all of the Vision, to the extent that the designated parties might regard it as inviting or forcing them to focus on its agencies, standards and procedures as their primary sources of motivation and of criteria for proper conduct.

The Committee is no longer around to guide or adjudicate, and never had a remit to do so in particular cases. We are on our own now; it is no longer there to correct our foolish ways. Hence, the participants can only refer to the Report (comprising the whole set of Reports) as expressing its will and testament as to what is to be done after its dissolution. Fortunately for those parties, the designated agencies of the Government are appointed (as we noted above, in the place and manner of priestly folk) to interpret the practical import of that complex testament. To that extent, the institutions are to be told what to do (or perhaps their conduct and fates are implicitly prescribed in the book of books that is the Vision of Dearing). We may well suppose that the institutions, as wards of the agencies, are relieved of any responsibility for reasoning individually or collectively as to what they should do for the best.

This supposition is not borne out by the Vision's text, in several respects. Firstly for instance, the institutions are enjoined at the outset to take part in formulating the standards and procedures, and in advising and sometimes staffing the agencies. Secondly at the level of aspiration, it is contrary to the Vision's primary aim of material and cultural improvement for benefit of the UK public and of students in particular that anyone should apply precepts without adjustment to local conditions. Thirdly, the Vision was explicitly concerned to launch its programme in the direction that seemed right within its limited purview. It did not pretend to chart the navigational adjustments, so to speak, that would guide us to a safe haven in its figural 20 years' duration.

Horizons of enlightenment

> Nevertheless, at the time he had the sensations of 'coming into harbour after a stormy passage'. Monica's [i.e. his Christian mother's] prayers for his conversion and baptism were answered. The son of so many tears could not be lost. [H. Chadwick 2001 p.27, writing of Augustine of Hippo during 386-7CE]

This next reverie on beacons and voyages tries to apply some vital notions and manœuvres of Jacques Derrida's *The Principle of Reason* ... [1984a] with a view to eliciting those themes in the Dearing Committee's Vision. It implicitly links those themes also through Ronald Barnett's notions of disturbance (whirling confusion) in post-modern conditions of *Supercomplexity* in his book Realizing the University ... [2000] so as to juxtapose elusive views of the truth of (Enlightened) reason in the texts of Derrida and Dearing. The particular terms of Derrida's text include: *abyss, protectionist barrier, chance, risk, gaze, reflection, destination, guardian* and *responsibility*. What this reverie may be read to imply is seldom stated. For instance, a spiel on light-houses suggests, perhaps, the consolations of constant surveillance at a distance. We are prompted by an ever-watchful eye to guide ourselves safely along our (rational) journeys. The navigational element

might have something to do travellers' tales and the way the Committee went about gathering its historical evidence. We could keep trying to extract a clear meaning from the analogy, yet such conjectures obtain no satisfactory answers.

In daylight or even in stormy darkness, we may figuratively approach the Truth of Reason by first orienting ourselves by its radiant path of *enlightenment*. In this figure, the human intellect, or the university, is likened to a beacon or lighthouse.

> Aside: *Pharos*, a peninsula near Alexandria, [now in] Egypt, whose [ramped tower] ... of white marble was ... about 40ft high with ... a beacon ... kept burning day and night [, that] stood for some 1600 years [from about 280 BCE] to 1302CE. [Elsevier 1977 p.788]

Atop the white tower glows the red fire. (Cassell: *ignis* fire; ... a watch-fire, lightning, the light of the stars, fire of the eyes, redness, glow of the passions of love or anger.) The fire watches over us; close to, it gazes toward a farther horizon beyond our purview. At night, the beam stretches across the wave-crests toward us, and to ward us. Radial and radiant, it tracks our passage from its firm yet almost insular ground.

Even when we dip below its horizon, the after-glow of conflagration may reach forth to find us. From afar, we may regard the red-on-white eye with longing as the glitter of a forever unattainable star, or glimpse it as a flash of lightning against our pitching horizon. Just as the animate eye—according to some accounts—casts its particular beam on the world, so we cast our gaze upon its gaze as the object of our longing or dread or equanimity. Perhaps the distant glow inflames our love of hearth and home, or anger at our plight, even as it stills the mind in adversity. We may beseech the deities to whom the lighthouse's structure and pyre, and respectively their builders and keepers, are dedicated. The keepers or priests are of utmost concern to us, since their constant observances of time, ritual and fuel orient our navigational headings to vouchsafe our safe arrival. (OHD *fuel* from *focus* hearth; Cassell: *focus* a hearth, an altar; *foveo* to keep warm, to cherish.) They guard even that which is neither in their keeping nor in their purview. [cf. in J. Derrida 1984a pp.26-7, contemplating the 'double guard' assigned to 'the strange destiny of the university'.] In a wider view: by safeguarding the passage of ships, the beacon sustains the economic and cultural life of the port and its hinterlands.

Without imposing too rigid a system on the diversity of beacons, we may imagine a mesh (*plexus*) of watch-towers around the known world. Some of them would mainly warn navigators to steer clear of reefs and currents, others would enable sailors to find their bearings, while yet others would be misplaced to lure vessels into the clutches of pirates and wreckers. We need not associate dutiful or altruistic motives with the greatest beacons. For instance the familiar smoke and angry pyroclastic eruptions from the active volcano of Stromboli in the Aeolian/Lipari Islands would serve as a landmark for Naples and Palermo across the Tyrrhenian Sea. (Elsevier 1977 p.990.) Whether from the gods or mortals, the coastal chain (as we perceive it by night) of beacons provides an unrestricted public service to all comers, goers and passers-by. Yet in adverse conditions, some beacons could prove false and treacherous.

Without true bearings, we would cast around for a landmark or sea-feature by which to check and set our heading. Even on a moonless night, a fortuitous flash of lightning might reveal the horizon to us and give any false beacon's game away, as a misleading advertisement. Perils at sea tend to assume a turbulent (spinning) motion, as in the disoriented lodestone, the whirlwind and the

whirlpool into the abyss. In tumultuous crisis, our thoughts are disturbed. (cf. Cassell: *turba pharos*, the priests of Isis) They go round in circles until we resolve on a particular course of action. Yet any closed circularity of action may also give rise to peril. For instance, if the keeper-priests of a beacon become wrapped up in their rituals, those (r)evolve into the ceremonial abyss of ritual enacting (miming) itself alone. Then the consuming pyre consumes its own being, the public eye extinguishes itself (blinks out) to reflect inwards, and we at sea lose our bearings. Thus driven by the elements, by our own efforts or by magic forces we might even stray beyond the north wind and the mountains. There lie the Hyperborean lands, so green and pleasant that we might choose never, or be unable ever, to return. (Liddell: *Hyperborei* an imaginary people in the extreme north, distinguished for piety and happiness.) Daydreaming of those enchanted lands whiles away time in the sea lanes between our busy ports of call.

As we arrive in harbour, we enter the din of polyglot communities and the echo of sailors' and merchants' argots as they banter around the docks. Not only goods but ideas and cultural practices migrate through these great gateways. But before we can reach an anchorage, we may confront a barrier: a chain across the harbour's entrance that has to be dipped to allow vessels to enter or leave. At a strange port or in time of tension, it provokes the anxiety that attends any threshold or portal. On a rare occasion we might be excluded and escorted from the approaches, or freely admitted but then detained inside the harbour. As we cross the bar, our hearty bearing disguises more commercial concerns: has a rival trader beaten us to market, will our contraband be found, will we bribe the guards enough? Despite such imaginings, it is usually the case that such entrances, exits and passages are safely and uneventfully negotiated. The tales doing the rounds of the ports convey news and hearsay, myth, gossip and prices.

We must attend to the historians' accounts of travellers' tales as to what they make of sailors' experiences and stories. But we must conversely attend to storytellers from another perspective: what do the sailors—who ply their living by voyaging—make of their passengers' stories? Travellers make voyages to relate that which counts for them as novel and outlandish, even though it may be routine for the crew of the vessel. Historians may be unkindly seen as impressionistic travellers or as monocultural, sometimes gullible, stay-at-homes. Even as seasoned campaigners, historians are limited in the telling to what they can invest with sufficient imagery and allegory to keep the attention of their audiences ('presencing').

> Aside: For a view of historian textuality, see C. Martindale pp.18-23, *Telling stories about the past*, especially in pp.20-1 citing Frank Kermode 1967 *passim*:
> 'Only in the structures of stories can a clear system of cause and effect, action and result, beginning and end—in short, of closure—be inscribed. ... History is a "mode of experience", a *praxis*: history is what historians do.
> ... Opposed to this positivistic approach is one which might be termed textualist, post-structuralist, conventionalist, culturalist, anti-foundationalist. On this model history—the past—is an "absence", and can never be restored to a full presence. It is only available to us in the form of "traces", first and foremost perhaps in the language we use, and then in the other "texts" which surround us. Past actions always have to be represented—*under*-represented—in a linguistic or other textual medium. ...'

A fanciful yarn may thus be truer to the observant traveller's impressions than any dry, factual account.

All this talk of watch-towers is no lesson in coastal navigation; pray do not rely on it at sea. Of what then might it be an allegory? Of human mind or society,

perhaps, or the university or higher education, or their guardians and wayfarers, so to speak? Of a global economy, in which the 'West' is dreamed as the Hyperborean lands of plenty? Perhaps all of those, and more. The matter is hardly one of historical situation but rather a play of predictive reason with eventual truth, or as Derrida puts it: [1984a, p.26] '... to keep both memory and chance'. Perhaps with Peter Scott's historian band, we may envisage the university embarking on a new venture as just one vessel in the flotilla (OHD, Spanish: a small fleet, or a fleet of small ships) whose banner would proclaim a new, higher learning:

> To start a journey is not always joyful
> Yet most would sail again across uncharted seas
> ... [W. Neill 1972; cf. Derrida 1984a p.26: '... the strange destiny of the university.']

In this adventure, we may neither rely on the old charts nor take fanciful schemes at face value. In Derrida's piece, the academy seeks refuge over an abyss of its own making: its *raison d'être*, its reason for being, its rationale for gambling on Enlightenment reason alone. It maintains protective barriers against incursions and inquisitions that may befall it. In Ronald Barnett's book Realizing the University ..., [2000] we are called to renew the university by compounding (generating, not seeking to vanquish) the disordered rhythms of a *supercomplex* age, in an ever-changing, dynamic sort of equilibrium. In the seafaring allegory: we should provoke the cross-currents, whirlwinds and whirlpools rather than languish in safe havens.

In the conservative tradition that Derrida [1984a] plays off against techno-scientific merchandising, we may liken the universities and colleges of higher learning to a pattern of beacons (standing for enlightened knowledge) whose stability is vital to the means of guidance they provide. Within the institution, we may liken the academic disciplines also to landmarks—even if they are arbitrarily chosen and only appointed to guard narrow passages of education. Some are allowed to fall into disuse, even as others are set up to recognise topics that seem new to the academy, such as cultural studies and nursing.

Poetry in motion, where words take root: on the many truths of Dearing

> For ... Emile Durkheim, the organization of society had to be on the basis of professional and producing groups. For the proponents of managerial élitism in the twentieth century the best organization of society is one under the control of the professional managers and administrators who alone possess the requisite knowledge for maintaining social equilibrium in the age of successive technological revolutions. [A.H. Halsey 1995 p.206, in a chapter on *Order and authority*]

TODAY, how can we not speak of research?

These words mimic the opening to Jacques Derrida's address in 1983/4, *The Principle of Reason: The University in the Eyes of its Pupils*. (p.5: 'TODAY, how can we not speak of the university?') He draws our attention to the abyss of self-reference that underlies the university's reason for being and to the protectionist barriers by which we mark off the abyssal grounding of university research from oriented (applied, utilitarian) ends. Two usual ways of pre-empting and countering queries as to the grounds of our research are economic benefit and

moral rectitude. However, these are notoriously difficult to substantiate, so we tend to resort to tokens of economic and socially progressive ends. The fact of funding, of a research project having been funded, serves as a mark or promise of eventual economic benefit at least. For moral justification—should such a question ever arise, or need to be pre-empted in the offing—our habit is to refer to scripture, or at least to some tome that stands in the place of public address and truth-speaking.

> Aside: This section works through rather long quotations. The original sources, if indeed one could isolate them without loss of inflection, do not lend themselves to direct quotation out of context, even at length. The paraphrases that are selected here re-present and interrelate their sources' modes of thinking. They are already paraphrases of the second order at least (D. Price's précis of M. Leiris's précis of G.W.F. Hegel's summary of ... etc.). Most have been through translation at least twice. To paraphrase or abbreviate them further here would risk losing any gist of their sources, and deprive the reader of the chance to glean preferred meanings.

Michel Leiris's phrase *rebellious terrain* might typify the Committee's Vision as representing to us a place of trust in a life hereafter. All such representations, he notes, 'share a confidence in the direction of explication—to explain what is here, within our lives'. They seek to describe 'how that specific place rests within a larger encompassing whole'. Thus a description [in Price's (1999) paraphrase of Leiris]:

> ... situates something within a representation that frames the whole, whether that whole itself is then found to be totalitarian or democratic in spirit. Nothing, it would seem, besides description, besides situating something within a representation that frames the whole, could capture the motion of world whose force is played out in the ways it situates us, addresses us, the ones who can speak. Poetry, if it is anything besides description, would only be a diversion, only another one of the things to be described, or just the diversion of an enjoyable world.
>
> But poetry may also be synonymous with the human effort to build a sense out of the passage—not a mere description, but rather a constructing or a unifying, perhaps thus even a divine, word. Poetry, that is, may invoke the inclination before the description—show us, for example, why all the descriptions should tend toward the same unity, the same motion. ...

The descriptions by which the poetic Vision urges us to narrativise this world include for instance standards, codes of practice and records of progress. Thus in Leiris's terms, the Dearing Vision exhorts us to act 'in this world, reaching toward that which is promised in the transcendent force of words'.

Standards and codes of practice come to resemble what Price calls 'the infinite and all-encompassing folds within Leibniz's monads'. (OHD: *monad* an ultimate unit of being.) They serve to programme our space of living. G. Vesy glosses Leibniz's *monadology* [in 1990 pp.200-1] as follows:

> ...Leibniz defined substance in terms, not of self-existence, but of activity. There is an infinity of monads. A monad does not interact causally with other monads but is, so to speak, 'programmed' by God to develop in a way which makes its development harmonise with that of other monads. ...

Monads mathematise our life and times and our social interactions in a monadic whole, thus: [in D. Price's (1999) paraphrase of Leibniz]

> ... for Leibniz, we live in the best of all possible worlds because what it means to exist is to be a possible thing striving to realize the fullest potentiality of existence, such that every object strives for its own perfection, since God's choice established a harmony for all striving. God's freedom is his light.

So:

> For Leibniz, the representation of space rules the identity of form and light. The monad lives within God's infinite intelligibility as the locus, the point of inflection or reflection, from which the rest of the whole is thought or expressed.

Where the Vision inspires us toward 'adding to the world's store of knowledge and understanding', [NCIHE 1997 paragraph 8] that worldly aim reflects, positions and forms us anew in the image of its divine counterpart of omniscience and the ultimate generative role.

The Vision promotes choice as the essence of individual freedom in social harmony. *Choices, decisions,* and *options* are to be exercised variously by students, institutions and the Government. [NCIHE 1997 paragraphs 36, 37 etc.] Whilst choices are usually to be made in individual circumstances, they tend to be framed explicitly by formal *frameworks, systems* and *information*. Coercion is only invoked as a last resort, since (as we noted in chapter 5, *Deconstructions*) the desired conduct is that of wholehearted consensus, of action in unison, in a community of enlightened interests. The shaping process at work here is that of mass movement in unanimous accord with revealed truth. Its origin, according to Schelling, is the individual subject's desire for freedom, prior to the choice between Good and Evil: [In D. Price's paraphrase, 1999]

> For Schelling, the subject, positioned by the feeling of free choice and by the task of choosing, conditions the advent of every possibility. The moment of embodiment, the production of specificity, then assumes a general shape—either in accordance with the Good, with the production of revelation and harmony, or with the Evil that separates itself from the motion of revelation. The shape of the world, in its motion, is gained through the freedom of the subject, by the desire of freedom, a desire that takes the shape of revelation, of light encompassing the darkness, of the world's parts becoming whole. Evil is the refusal to move, the refusal to be taken up into the motion of form. ... For Schelling, that basic shape was Good, was the unity of the subject standing in the place of freedom as the desire for and striving after unity.

We are called upon in such a way as to incline us to choose the Good:

> Why, in Schelling's terms, would the Good address us in such a way as to incline us toward the Good choice? For Schelling, the structure of address lies in the essence of the one God, in his essence as light, as arising from the Urground as the desire for ground and light. ... Schelling's response, against the easy ontotheology of Hegel's constant secularizing progress, is to put God's freedom before His light.

This inclination resonates with the Dearing Vision's calls for enlightened action, for movement and change, rooted in choice by subjects desirous of unity—a condition of freedom in concert with all other subjects.

The Dearing Inquiry takes place in—i.e. responds to by enacting—a demand and a unity of development prior to systematic thinking. It calls forth the distinctions that are necessary to the establishment of systems. Through those distinctions, it expresses its concerns systematically in frameworks of conduct, and gathers them into a sense of freedom for anyone who accepts the bond or compact of those frameworks. In Heidegger's reading of Schelling, that sense of

freedom responds to the demand for necessary movement rather than to the systems or frameworks that it conditions: [In D. Price's paraphrase, 1999]

> Heidegger turns to Schelling's freedom essay because it provides a contestation of the necessity of system. The unity of a developing and moving God, as motion, precedes the distinction into existence (light) and ground, (gravity or darkness), that would be necessary to the establishment of system. ... the important point for Heidegger is the demand that necessity be instituted at the place of system and not the fact of system itself—that is, by concentrating on the structure and motion of that demand, Heidegger understands Schelling as not being tied to systematic concerns, but not as excluding all system. ... [Note 9: Heidegger thematizes the gathering into sense; also note 14: The sense of this address is tied to the way in which we are bound to God through/as our freedom.]

Our response to the divine call is necessary to invoke '... a new thinking of justice arising from out of the motion of being ...'. Heidegger puts this condition negatively as follows: '... no one sees the necessity, no one feels the call to continue to address the difficulty of turning inwards, into the words appropriate to such a place'. Beyond its secular address, the Dearing Inquiry calls for a re-visiting of the place of freedom of inquiry, the place from which the necessity of discerning systems and frameworks can be demanded anew.

Thus far in pursuit of the Truth of poetry in the Dearing Vision of Higher Education in the learning society, we have followed closely in the wake of Daniel Price's tour of thinkers on and around Michel Leiris's *rebellious terrain*. We have drawn out parallels and analogies from the text of the Vision. We have in effect placed ourselves in judgement over against that text: constituting meanings and making sense of its possibilities. In Price's reading of Leiris, the terrain in which poetry takes root is rebellious in that it 'resists desertion and motion' of 'the authority of an author's voice or grasp'. To engage with what Derrida has to say, we must desert what Price calls 'the comforting structures of a recognisable form', the place of choosing and writing, for 'movement beyond every possibility'. The *higher education* of the Vision recognises its opposite figure in near-silence: the *university* of exclusive academia. As we have noted in chapter 2, *Context*, and at the start of *Ideas of higher education* above, the Vision subsumes both *higher education* and *the university* into a representation of the absolute *learning society*.

Derrida resists the possibility of such a smooth progression into authoritative stasis: [D. Price 1999; ensuing quotations are also from this source]

> Derrida contests the unity of any representation of the Absolute, but like Schelling also sees the shape of individuality or specificity necessarily disrupting every supposedly smooth progression through time—the shape of singularity, of the uneven differencing and deferring of things, precedes the possibilities of action ... Like Schelling, then, Derrida refuses Leibniz's metaphysics—although he will speak neither of a subject, nor of God's freedom—when he invokes an impossibility, as ultimate condition, preceding all possibility. An impossibility which is the movement beyond every possibility; the event beyond every stasis.

The text acts upon singularity by striating (furrowing) it into multiplicity:

> Derrida, it seems, looks for a locus of multiplicity striating singularity in a place that would not be the subject; he calls it a text.

That multiplicity precedes any attempt to order events beyond one's lifespan, as through the systems and frameworks proposed by the Vision of Dearing:

> Derrida, like Schelling, is finding the necessity of commencement at the point of choice ... With Derrida, apparently, meaning is only instituted when the motion of the promise of a beyond is set into place: the text is striated by the promise that there will be something more to say, that iteration will be possible.

A unity is afforded not through an eternal clarity, but in the words of an other:

> ... the unity of the possibility of iteration—that first unity that Derrida announces in the process of locating the place of the text. The words will be responded to, albeit perhaps without the comforting structures of a recognizable form, in the words of another. ... Our rationality may not be shared, our clarity may not be the same as others's, *[sic]* but the combating clarities of our articulations will all belong to the space of a certain, ineluctable, necessary, and perhaps even divine motion ... Poetry is necessary, like violence, Derrida would seem to say, but the motion continues past our death—poetry is necessary because it belongs to the necessity of an impossible motion. The text transcends the subject, even if nothing will escape the place of the text.

Other than through the transient space of poesy, then, we cannot meet and move together.

The persona of the Vision's text preoccupies or roots itself in the certainty of its demise, as in Leiris's account of poetry:

> ... the constant rebellion of a place is secured by the certainty of death, and its expression is always to be thought from the poetry that addresses itself to this difficulty, as that which roots itself in the difficulty.

In contrast, Derrida's unity is fragile rather than secure:

> Against Leiris, the terrain is not rebellious, not a place that resists desertion and motion, since it will be capable of extending beyond every supposed limit because its basic law is dissemination, exchange, motion. ... For Derrida, such a unity of motion cannot be vouchsafed—unless it be at the undeconstructible point of the structure of the messianic promise, at the point where there will be, always, constantly, more iteration within the text, more undoing of the violence that would name itself just.

The unity of motion's difficulty over the certainty of death is susceptible only to a simple demand for justice, before any gathering into the necessity of system:

> The difficulty of deconstruction, that is, would finally find itself encompassed within the simplicity of the demand for a justice that no word would capture—like the messianic promise that corresponds to no particular dogmatically embraced messiah. ... The difference Derrida points to, however, is between being addressed by the necessity of belonging to the motion of disjointing or belonging to the gathering motion he associates with Heidegger ...

Obscured in its elaborate provision of bureaucratic frameworks and systems, the Vision conveys a demand for justice in its admission of 'external factors' (paragraph 16) that place any possible remedy beyond its own remit of inquiry into higher education. That seems explicit in paragraph 91: 'The state ... must ensure that access to opportunities for individuals to benefit from higher education is socially just'. However the supposition that the apparatus of state could accomplish such a task supplants that pre-systematic potential. Rather, we may suppose, the simplest call for justice arises as a response of its reader, well beyond the Inquiry's ken, perhaps at second or third hand, etc. in the flotsam of commentary in its wake.

We may also suppose that a national Report could be guaranteed to transcend its span of writing, yet rebellious poetry (according to Price) would work without such assurance:

> Perhaps, then, the weight of the sacred task of poetry would not be carried by its transcendence, not even the limited transcendence of a constant articulation here below. Instead, and only perhaps, such a weight may be borne by a rebellious poetry whose passage is not necessary, whose iteration is not guaranteed.

According to Price, for both Derrida and Heidegger, 'to be addressed by the necessity of a divine motion ... an articulation that does not belong to the flow of the everyday' demands a turning toward that necessity, in a form of becoming. That is to say: a gathering into a unity of motion (Heidegger) or a disjointing or dissemination (Derrida). Price calls for emphasis on the fragility of the necessary as 'a tentative step toward reworking the supposed shape of the demands that turning toward the necessary would carry'. He refers to: '...the sacred character of having been addressed by this motion that brings us into the fragility, and the fragility of the shape, of our presence to the world.' Thus the jussive (OED: expressing a command or order) yet surrogate demands of an advisory national report may only be satisfied with forms of compliance. Its call for justice is carried as it were by a fragile necessity, and then only in the voice of the other, 'where we may fail to do the Good, to do what is necessary'. [D. Price]

Where do we researchers find ourselves in relation to, or in the building of, a world of possible knowledge? Do we, in Derrida's tableau, [in his 1984a *The Principle of Reason* ..., especially pp.6-8, 19, and 26-7] gaze hard-eyed upon a world of beings, classifying and naming its elements for all time? Do we, with eyes closed in a long blink, turn away from that world to listen and reflect in the place of scholarship? Or does some rhythm (as it were) of opening and closing our eyelids enable us to listen and observe the more acutely, to 'Keep the memory and keep the chance' (as cited above), the eventual, together as the utterly other? Do we risk the tradition of academic research by a transfusion of new thinking and priorities, as necessary to a fragile survival?

Even as the questions demand to be addressed, this passage of reverie comes to rest in Leiris's valediction, as rendered in Price's translation:

> To be addressed, or rather, to be in the place of the address—the place called upon to be a place from which the divine, the articulation of the world, will commence. Derrida thinks here of the apostrophe, of addressing the reader directly, at the place of prayer, and of reading a few lines of a sacred text—you too, oh reader, must take on the weight of this place, this passage into words and the permanent inadequacy of words. This is the "must," however, of a fragile necessity, of a necessity that may be failed, that carries with it, in its rebel fragility, the terrain of our only certainty, and the trust that accrues only when words take root.

The Truth of politics and the politics of Truth in the Dearing manifesto

> Since critique guides the academic profession as expediency informs politics, a report can rarely be at the same time principled and expedient, critical and consensual. ... [D. Robertson 1998 p.8, commenting on reception of the Dearing Report]

Positioning the Dearing manifesto

We now take leave of the Truths of poetry and board a vehicle built of hard fact and bound for a singular, or at least gathered and situated, Truth of politics. It is a branch of metaphysics with empirical components. Our passage into it is by way of natural history, more-or-less in a manner by which political scientists (politologists) analyse and compare ideologies. Around the General Election of May 1997 in the UK, as on other such occasions, the political parties' manifestos set out their promises and programmes of what they would do on gaining parliamentary power. These were, again not unusually, couched in general appraisals of the national issues to be addressed.

To engage in a comparison of manifestos, we shall treat the NCIHE's Vision as a public, cross-party document of its time (i.e. *secular*): as the Dearing 'manifesto' of 1997. We shall use a particular manual for this analysis: the book The New British Politics by Ian Budge, Ivor Crewe, David McKay and Ken Newton [1997]. It outlines and applies methods of assessing Left-Right ideology in manifestos and of comparing the most prominent campaign issues in their texts. [I. Budge 1997 pp.408-11, especially Tables 17.2 and 17.3.] The approach is that of counting points on a set of scales for measuring political leanings in terms of signs of characteristic ideologies. The technique is best treated as a tool to aid thinking, rather than as a precise instrument. In the book's authors' view: [p.408]

> How do election programmes relate to ideology? ... Ideology is a particular way of viewing the political world which makes it understandable from the viewpoint of doing something about the situation. The manifestos are programmes for government action so it follows that they are strongly influenced by party ideology.
>
> This shows when you read manifestos issued by different parties at the same election. These often give ... dramatically opposed accounts of the situation ... Thus in 1997 the Conservative manifesto painted a glowing picture of a Britain with an expanding economy and prosperity trickling down to all, while the Labour document talked of the country's crisis in education and welfare and of the growth of poverty. ...
>
> Such differences occur in part because ideologies lead parties to focus on different groups and developments as important. The Conservative reference point is the South-Eastern middle class and their concerns with financial markets, order and opportunity. Labour is more focused on the peripheries [of the UK, relative to the South-East middle class] and their problems of economic stagnation, bad housing and health.
>
> ... Differences in the party programmes also occur because the parties' ideologies and history make them proprietors of different issues. ...

We will illustrate this process by putting the Dearing Vision—as a manifesto—through the same form of analysis as Budge *et al.* use to position political parties' manifestos on a 'Left-Right' scale according to the issues they promote. Of course we must exercise due caution in employing a similar analysis. Even in its proper context this is a highly subjective process and one of which the writers of manifestos have to be strategically aware. Here we are trying to extend a published diagnosis on a basis of make-believe, without calling upon the critical judgements of political analysts. To attempt that, we have to map the items cited as criteria of ideology—nationalisation, free enterprise etc.—onto the wording of the Vision's text. On an intuitive basis, that mapping presents little difficulty except for topics of *law and order* and *nationalisation* as noted below.

The method of analysis is to count the number of sentences that address a particular issue. Each issue is deemed to be typically Left wing (counted as numerically negative) or Right wing (positive). The values assigned to a manifesto are then summed to indicate its degree of leaning to Left or Right. The process applied here adapts the technique outlined in Budge *et al.*, so as to take account of the many complex sentences and lists embedded in the Vision's text. The table below conflates two of Budge's Tables (17.2 and 17.3) to show the mapping used here (with some adaptation) between *general issues* in manifestos and typical *Left-Right differences*.

Table 11 - Mapping of Left—Right concerns onto general issues

General Issue	Comprising Left—Right concerns	
	Left wing ('negative') items	**Right wing ('positive') items**
Government effectiveness and authority		Effective authority
Law and order		Law and order
(*Added:* via quality assurance, assumed to enable policing)		Constitutionalism: positive
Economic goals	Economic planning	Economic orthodoxy
	Controlled economy	
Regulation of capitalism	Regulation of capitalism	
Technology and infrastructure (*Added:* taken as enabling national / central control)	Nationalisation	
Social services expansion	Welfare: positive	
Incentives		Incentives
Noneconomic groups		(Noneconomic groups)
Decentralisation		(Decentralisation: positive)
European Union		(European Union: negative or positive)
Social justice		(Social justice)
Education expansion	Education expansion: positive	
Environmental protection		
Internationalism	Internationalism: positive	
Social harmony		Social harmony
National way of life		National way of life: positive
Freedom and enterprise		Freedom
		Free enterprise
Labour groups	Labour groups: positive	
Democracy	Democracy	
Protectionism (*Added:* to counter external threat)	Protectionism: positive	

Notes:
This table is adapted from I. Budge *et al.* [1997 pp.409-10]. Interpretive notes that I have inserted start with '*Added:*'. The items shown in mid-spectrum are considered neutral or to have a slight leaning as indicated.

Items from Budge's Table 17.3 are treated as general issues to cater for these themes in the Dearing Vision: *social harmony, national unity, freedom and enterprise, labour groups, democracy* and *protectionism*. Items not taken up from Budge's Table are: *military* (negative and positive), *peace, decolonisation, social services expansion* (negative), *protectionism* (negative), and *traditional morality* (positive).

Details of the analysis are in a document on the CD-ROM: Issue_association_analysis.doc.

The upshot from analysing 445 issue-codes across the Vision sample's 264 sentences is as shown below:

Table 12 - Result of mapping Left—Right concerns of the Dearing Vision

Leanings	Left wing	Right wing
	188 items (42%)	258 items (58%)
Overall tendency	The gap is +16% i.e. to the Right.	

In terms of Budge's Figure 17.2, p.410, that result lies farther to the Right than the Labour manifesto in 1997 at 8%, but less so than the Conservative one at 30%. It is sensitive to extents of less than -11%, -2% and +9% to the particular assumptions made here, as tabled below:

Table 13 - Sensitivity to particular assumptions

	That items concerned with ...	promote ...
a.	*quality*	a striving for educational law and order
b.	*technology and infrastructure*	national / central control
c.	*central control*	a unity of nationalism

The effects of removing each of these factors are as follows:

Table 14 - Effect of occluding each factor

a.	No change.
b.	Just to the Right of ideological neutrality, with Labour.
c.	Almost as Right wing as the Conservatives.

For a comparable but time-based analysis, see Budge's Figure 17.2 on p.410, showing the Labour party's ideology shifting rapidly Right-ward, the Liberal Democrats moving less rapidly to the Right and Conservatives in stasis since 1985.

As it happens, the influences of the seven main factors (from Nationalisation to Economic Orthodoxy, in the detailed analysis) are similar in impact (around 9% to 11%), and are more-or-less balanced across Left-ward and Right-ward effects. If we reassign any one of them, the apparent ideological position of the Vision shifts variously toward neutrality, beyond that of Labour and toward—but still short of—the Conservative position. Revision of the effects of more than one main factor in the same direction would position the Vision's ideology to the Left of neutrality (with the Liberal Democrats) or to the Right of the Conservatives. Allowing for that much leeway of interpretation, though, we can assess the

Vision's ideology as lying in the zone to the Right of neutrality, and closer to the Labour position than that of the Conservative party.

Whereas the analysis above is only mimicking a formal version of political scientists' thinking processes, it does suggest the nuanced, historical attention to language that is required to arrive at a useful political assessment. It also indicates the latitude for divergent readings of any political document. Such a reading can be based on analyses that are grounded in subjective judgements. It is always embedded in the recursive, strategic game of political rhetoric and commentary (theorising).

The reduction of a whole manifesto to a data point on a graph seems drastic and simplistic. The approach, as we noted at the start of this analysis, is highly subjective; yet it can serve to detect shifts in ideology. If it is repeated for many party political documents, public broadcasts etc. across an interval of months or years, such an analysis can build up a picture of relative, ideological shifts in the parties' pronouncements. That is what Ian Budge *et al.* do [1997 p.410] in their Figure 17.2*: Left-right movements of the three major British parties, 1945-97.* Similarly, we could analyse sample texts from reports of Government-sponsored inquiries into the university system and higher education during that period. For instance, it would be instructive to analyse a sample of the Robbins Higher Education report [L. Robbins 1963], especially pp.268-291: *Summary of the Report* and *List of Recommendations*. We could compare the results with those from the 1997 NCIHE Summary Report and more recent policy statements. Ronald Barnett has already done relevant work in his essay *The Coming of the Global Village....* [R. Barnett 1999] Since we are here concerned with a text from 1997, we will instead attend to the Dearing manifesto's ideology at the level of general issues, in relation to the political parties' manifestos as they were analysed briefly in I. Budge *et al.* [1997].

The Dearing manifesto's emphases on general issues

The table below compares the 'top ten' issues for each main party (as derived in I. Budge *et al.* 1997) with the Dearing Vision's 'top ten' concerns.

Table 15 - Percentage of citations of each general issue

[Adapted from I. Budge p.409 1997, Table 17.2] (rounded to the nearest whole number)

General Election 1997: general issues	'Top-ten' items across the 3 parties	Cons. %	Lib. Dem. %	Lab. %	Analysis of Dearing manifesto (sentences in sample text) % ('top ten' issues)	Analysis of Dearing manifesto (sentences in sample text) NCIHE affinity (main in bold)
Government effectiveness & authority	(topmost, esp. Cons.; not Lib.Dem.)	13		11	9	Cons/Lab
Law & order (*Added*: including 'quality')	(esp. Cons.)	10	6	7	13	Cons/Lib Dem /Lab
Economic goals	(esp. Cons.)	8	6	6	18	Cons/Lib Dem/Lab

Table 15 - Percentage of citations of each general issue (continued)

Left/Right traits [Adapted from I. Budge p.410 Table.17.3: distinctive traits only]

General Election 1997: general issues	'Top-ten' items across the 3 parties	Cons. %	Lib. Dem. %	Lab. %	% ('top ten' issues	NCIHE's affinity
Regulation of capitalism	(Cons. only)	5				-
Technology and infrastructure (*Added*: for national/central control)	(even)	5	5	7	11	Cons./Lib. Dem. /Lab.
Social services expansion	(esp. Lib.Dem.)	5	9	6		-
Incentives	(Cons. only)	5			4	Cons.
Noneconomic groups	(even)	4	5	4		-
Decentralisation : positive	(even)	4	5	5		-
European Union: negative	(Cons. only)	4				-
Social justice	(Lib.Dem. & Lab.)		7	5		-
Education expansion	(Lib.Dem. & Lab.)		6	4	9	Lib.Dem. /Lab.
European Union: positive	(Lab. only)			3		-
Environmental protection	(Lib.Dem. only)	8				-
Internationalism : positive	(Lib.Dem. only)	4			6	Lib.Dem.
Social harmony	(Right)				9	Right
National way of life	(Right)				6	Right
Freedom	(Right)				4	Right
Labour groups	(Left)					
Democracy	(Left)					
Protectionism (*vs.* external threat)	(Left)					

There is a broad resemblance of pattern, such that the Dearing Vision's profile appears as if it might have come from another mainstream manifesto. Indeed it shares several main concerns with all three, or two out of three, of the parties. The picture that emerges is however more conservative than the positioning exercise above would lead us to expect. This effect is particularly marked in respect of *economic goals*, also *government effectiveness and authority, law and order* (through *quality assurance*), and *incentives*. In addition,

the Dearing Vision's text's emphases in regard to *education expansion* and *internationalism* echo some themes of the Liberal Democrats.

In topics outside of the 'top ten' issues of any main party, however, the Vision reveals some moderate concerns of its own: *social harmony*, *freedom* and a *national way of life*. These we recognise from the Left-Right analysis by I. Budge *et al.* as typical of Right wing ideology. Hence in terms of the general issues identified here we can consider the pattern of Dearing concerns to resemble that of a Conservative and Right-wing manifesto, except in topics over which the main parties' concerns are moderate or close to each other. From Table 7 above we can read off some telling discrepancies where the Vision's text registers little or no concern for issues that are more or less emphasised in the manifestos: on *regulation of capitalism*, on *social justice*, for or against *the European Union*, and for *internationalism*. It is also worth noting that, like the main parties, the Dearing Vision shows no 'top ten' level of concern for the Left-wing issues of *labour groups*, *democracy* and *protectionism* (against external competition or threat), even though each of these is occasionally emphasised in its text.

Clusters of issues

Before we leave this comparison of the Vision with its concurrent manifestos, we shall note the outcome of a brief analysis for this dissertation that builds on the measures of ideology by I. Budge *et al.* It examines sentences that address two or more issues apiece. The elaboration of findings is as follows.

Table 16 - Rating of the Vision's ideology with respect to general issues

General issue	Comprising ideology codes	NCIHE's sentences	% of 445 citations
Government effectiveness and authority	auth	42	9%
Law and order	law + cons	2	-
(*Added:quality*—in a sense 'law and order')	-	59	13%
Economic goals	orthecon + econplan + contecon	81	18%
Regulation of capitalism	regcap	4	1%
Technology and infrastructure (*Added:* taken as nationalisation / central control)	tech	51	11%
Social services expansion	welf	8	2%
Incentives	inc	20	4%
Noneconomic groups	nonecon	1	-
Decentralisation: positive	decent	12	3%
European Union: negative	-	-	-
Social justice	just	10	2%
Education expansion	edex	39	9%
European Union: positive	eu	1	-
Environmental protection	-	-	-
Internationalism: positive	intl	28	6%
Left/Right traits:			
[Adapted from I. Budge 1997 p.410 Table.17.3: distinctive traits]			
Social harmony	sh	43	9%
National way of life	nat	27	6%
Freedom	freeent, free	18	4%
Labour groups	labgrp	7	2%
Democracy	democ	3	1%
Protectionism (vs. threat)	prot	2	-

Note: Details of the analysis, with encoding table, are attached in the *Politics* subfolder of *Recordances* on the CD-ROM.

When coded and analysed, the pairs of such issues were found to be abundant. They yielded dominant clusters as follows:

educational expansion
orthodox economics
economic planning
government effectiveness and authority
law and order (as marked by quality assurance)
technology and infrastructure

These clusters of issues appear to coexist in a state of tension. The expansive impulse is channelled through *ways and means*, so to speak. It is countered by a controlling impulse that resorts to legislative and administrative instruments of enforcement. Yet together these impulses idealise a complex will to bring about desired states of affairs by calculation, influence and firm direction.

By restricting the cluster analysis to instances of three or more issues per sentence, we make its outcome more tenuous yet perhaps more intriguing. We find an *educational expansion* cluster that emphasises systems of control:

educational expansion
economic planning
technology and infrastructure

Thus treated as a political manifesto, the clearest aim that the Vision promotes is the destiny it makes manifest for higher education in the UK: *to expand*. That principle aligns it with the educational expansionism of the Liberal Democrat and Labour parties' manifestos. In an essential and timeless orientation, higher education expands, has expanded and will continue to expand. A primary concern of the Vision is that of how to cater for processes of expansion by way of enabling technology and infrastructure guided by economic planning. Its pragmatic programme of expansion grounds itself in a prudent realism of financial and administrative controls: *orthodox economics* and *quality assurance*.

A distinct cluster around *regulation of capitalism* juxtaposes Government with business interests:

regulation of capitalism
government effectiveness and authority
free enterprise

A *decentralisation* cluster mainly invokes *social harmony*:

decentralisation
social harmony (authority, democracy, technology)

while an *internationalism* cluster invokes *national quality* and *national way of live* with further social factors across party lines:

internationalism
quality assurance
national way of life
orthodox economics
social justice
democracy

These complex clusters are bound into a social and administrative compact by *participative* issues:

social justice
democracy
social harmony
government effectiveness and authority
technology and infrastructure

The clusters listed above trace the outlines of a political mission in the cross-party Dearing Inquiry's Vision text, treated as a political manifesto. The technique focuses on so small a proportion of the statements in that sample—however telling—that we must regard them most cautiously.

Annexus of all Truths: dissemblance

We are almost at the stage of departing this chapter without resolution of the Ideas of Truth.

> Aside—OED: *dissemblance* departure, dispersion; *dissembly* dissimulation, disguise; also the nonce-word *dissembly* the separation of an assembly.

Is that it? Have we fulfilled a compact and pledged our liberty of interpretation in respect of our debt to the Vision? (OHD: *nexus* a bond; Cassell: ... by which the debtor pledged liberty as security for debt.) Have we revealed the Truths of the Dearing Vision? Do we stand four-square, in the place of the address, on the firmness of the columns of Truth? What adequate firmament or entablature do we thus uphold? Let us revisit these Ideas of Truth, ever so briefly:

Table 17 - Some strands from the Ideas of truth

An Idea of religious Truth	In which higher education is set apart to render a national, social service of teaching and of keeping the archives of knowledge.
An Idea of the Truth of reason	Where the university gazes knowingly upon the world made manifest. The Vision desires to invest that standing with a noble ideal of national wellbeing.
A rebellious terrain addressed by Poetry in motion	Here the Vision promotes freedom of choice in a setting of social harmony that subsumes *higher education* (and *the university* doubly wrapped within it) to the ends of *the learning society*.
The Truth of politics and the politics of Truth	The Vision's somewhat Right-wing ideology echoes themes of Liberal Democracy in its educational expansionism and internationalism.

We could integrate these findings, if that is what they are, in various ways. We could reify and inter-relate them, using appropriate frameworks, as concepts, personalities, deities or perhaps aspects of a sublime Unity (monad). That effort would be to no avail; the unruly Ideas insist on going their separate ways. Is this behaviour true (True) to the Vision and to its objects of *higher education* and *the learning society*? We may well assert that it is, since on the surface of its address the Vision appears to shuffle its feet to the tune of any party that might prove coercive or biddable toward its interests. Yet that would be unfair, for the Vision never convincingly claims to be anything other than pragmatic. Then there is the runaway matter of the many Truths of the Vision that this chapter does not address—too many, by far, to unravel and comprehend.

Perhaps we need to be lighter on our feet and more creative to keep up with the ever-changing stories of people and of hopes with which the Vision's textuality resonates. The next chapter promises to seek out some imaginative readings of the Dearing Vision.

7 Disseminations

dissemino to spread abroad, disseminate (e.g. of an evil, or of talk and discourse); from *sero* (root SE-, hence *semen*, seed) to sow, seed, plant; also from *sero*: *sermo, sermonis* talk, conversation, discourse; learned conversation, discussion, dialogue; manner of speaking; diction, dialect (Cassell's Latin Dictionary)

Stuck in the middle (voice)

This session responds to Jacques Derrida's call to 'view viewing' in the university [1984a] and Ronald Barnett's call to compound 'Supercomplexity' [2000, title]. We shall re-engage, as if for the first time, with the sample text from the Summary Report of the Dearing Committee [1997]. The approach used here juxtaposes its political text with evocative works of art to see what presents itself between them, so to speak. The chapter is thus empirical in the sense of conducting an experiment or exercise. It performs an associative act of imagination rather than an evaluation of observed political influences, ideologies or outcomes. The choice of text and the choice of image are both more-or-less arbitrary, with all the risks for accountability and repetition that such textual research entails. No universal or absolute truths are guaranteed to emerge, even when the sample text and the chosen image both allude to high ideals.

Why then would we attempt this tentative action? The most plausible purpose may be that of creating a detour around some habitual, dialectical ways of thinking. In a context of policy about higher education, particular discourses structure contemporary thinking about relationships among the state, civil society and the higher educational institutions. However, seeking such a detour need not be our sole purpose, nor need we prescribe a precise method nor even establish desired outcomes before the event, since those would precisely conform to our usual modes of expression. The most that this approach can promise is a respite or illusion of escape; yet in that brief interval we may glimpse alternative and perhaps useful views of our own habitual perspectives.

We will juxtapose this dissertation's chosen fragment, the Vision text from the summary report, Higher Education in the Learning Society [of the Dearing Report, 1997] in part with Joseph Beuys's [1965] 'Action' (or *Aktion*, a campaign) titled *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*. This hesitant move follows Gregory L. Ulmer's [1985] 'post(e)-pedagogic' reverie on that Beuysian Action, among others. The Dearing Committee totters, as it were, to and fro under the influence of 'powerful forces' that bring expansions and cut-backs, call for qualifications and standards, demand both excellence and conformance, and so forth. As it vacillates between stridently seeking 'levers of control' and quietly planning for 'eventual action', we may discern a spontaneous 'middle voice' applying to itself. That middle voice bespeaks of the Dearing Vision's affirmative views, an ambivalent 'community of dissensus' [Bill Readings 1996 p.127] and a Kierkegaardian, iterative 'experiment' of the singular. The clamour of the mass market too often overwhelms an inner experience of learning. Yet alongside the present grappling of academy and market, we respond in this session to the Dearing Inquiry's

yearning for discussion. We do so by inquiring as to what steps such a reflexive 'middle voice' might engender.

Precedents for this manner of reading-askance by allusion and parable include Gregory L. Ulmer's reverie on Joseph Beuys's [1965] 'Action' or *Aktion* as mentioned above and elaborated below. Its converse—political reading of a work of art—is exemplified for instance in Janet Jackson's [1998] *Burne-Jones: Escapist Dreamer or Political Activist: An Interpretation of the Briar Rose*. In such hybrid texts, the reader takes part in a parabolic journey, a hazardous crossing, as if suspended over the gulf of understanding between the domains of imagery and the ordering of human, civil affairs.

> Aside: Joseph Beuys's Action is addressed in some detail, along with commentaries, in a document on the compact disk (CR-ROM) that supplements this dissertation. It (de)constructively juxtaposes and-or fuses the Beuysian Action with the Vision of Dearing.

A Beuysterous round of Dearing

In this chapter, we will consider each section of the Dearing Vision's text plus later sections of the Summary Report apart from its most detailed technical proposals on funding. We will seldom refer to Beuys, since the allusion to his work is simply to suggest a frame of mind. Rather we will seek to apply the thinking of various sources that are accessible from such a frame of mind to the apparent thinking of the selected sections of the Vision.

Introduction (paragraph 1)

The Committee boldly urges the reader ('You') to read all of its recommendations. (paragraph 1) Though some recommendations are designated as 'key' to the Committee's 'vision' for 20 years ahead, all are vital, so they are not to be implemented in a piecemeal manner. (paragraph 128) Even before its *Introduction*, the Report reproduces its *Terms of Reference*, to whose wording it harks back implicitly in every section so as to demonstrate the compliance of its recommendations to its remit. Thus from start to finish the Report enacts a businesslike, curricular model of performance to specification; categorically, we can say: no more and no less.

Here, in scrupulous homage to the Inquiry's performance, we gain uplift in Joseph Beuys's exemplary Action of endearment.

The Committee's approach to its work (paragraphs 10-11)

Projecting its desire for sufficient recognition and respect to gain its findings a fair hearing, the Committee acknowledges its debt for the 'tremendous support and commitment to our task from those within and outside higher education.' This debt presents the Committee as a responsible collectivity in dynamic relation to its sponsors. In Samuel Weber and Wlad Godzich's terms, this sets it apart from any institution by acknowledging social indebtedness: [Wlad Godzich's *Afterword* to S. Weber 1987 p.162]

> ... To pursue the financial metaphor, institutions do not acknowledge the debt [for the meaning they dispense] as their own but collect the interest on it, thereby fostering the formation and the maintenance in dominant position of a privileged class. This is the target of deconstructive practice, which aims at nothing less than, in a first stage, the restoration of a universal indebtedness since this appears to be the only ground on which equality, as a social fact, can be thought of. ...

The Committee's firm acknowledgement involves the contributors—and hence by implication, all of 'us' who were invited to contribute—in a universal indebtedness for shaping and reporting the *sensus communis* (the commonplace way of thinking) that affirms the Vision's *social compact* and that grounds it in a parity of agency. By according high value to every contributor's submission to the Inquiry's punctual process, the Committee confers on them—and hence solicits for itself—an implicit status of precious worth (dearness). That process is exemplary and remains open through the *compact* to those parties who have not yet redeemed themselves by participation as invited.

To mimic Gregory L. Ulmer's grammatology of Joseph Beuys's Actions, [1985 p.242] we may imagine the Committee's public action or performance as comprising several elements. These are: the discursive material available to it; the action of assembling the material into the Report, the Report itself as a literary form, the time and process of informational decay and the reader-viewer's active response. The Committee presses into service the material publicly submitted to the Inquiry. It accords to each sort of discursive material a 'homogeneous character', as 'a material pressed together, with an uneven structure'. It 'interrogates the materials in turn to discover their "own" properties, the natural motivation that would accompany their presence in a work'. (As Ulmer explains this [1985, in chapter 8 *Performance: Joseph Beuys* p.244], these quoted phrases refer to Beuys's use of the elements of fat and felt, 'closely related' through their morphological properties.)

In its creative, didactic role, the Committee performs a sequence of steps in a necessary order of principles: from chaos, through movement, to form. [G.L. Ulmer 1985 p.247, citing Sarenco 1980 p.18] It has to take the assembled thought-materials and act upon them, to produce objects for demonstration. These objects and the Committee thus become 'transmitters' in an exemplary 'energy centre' for teaching. [in Beuys's terms, p.245] The main product here is the transient, pedagogic act, as an incitement to thoughtful expression. As Joseph Beuys explains [as reported in G.L. Ulmer 1985 p.245]:

> To be a teacher is my greatest work of art. The rest is the waste product, a demonstration. If you want to explain yourself you must present something tangible. But after a while this has only the function of a historic document. Objects aren't very important for me anymore. I want to get to the origin of matter, to the thought behind it. Thought, speech, communication—and not only in the socialist sense of the word—are all expressions of the free human being.

The performance comprises its public's responses, whatever forms those may take. Such responses to the Dearing Vision have been taking place not so much in a prepared locus of online discussion as in political, research and educational settings in the UK and abroad. Those discussions act as elements both to complete the Committee's performance and to carry it into further contexts beyond its transient purview. It is up to a reader whether to take steps in response to the incitements of the Report as broadcast. Suitable action might involve identifying with the undefined addressee, supplying a reference in the reader's own situation and acting on that relation—so as to (re-)inscribe the reader's own context. This structure of dissemination and germination adopts

what Ulmer [1985 p.250] cites as the functions of an object in Beuys's 'multiples' and Action-Environments, that are also (according to Derrida) at work in Stéphane Mallarmé's (non-representational yet not originary) Mime.

Higher education today (paragraphs 12-15)

In view of a doubling of the number of students over the previous 20 years and a 40% fall in the unit of funding per student, the Vision suavely endorses concerns (paragraph 15: '... there are some concerns ...'). These are about quality assurance, narrow provision of qualification routes, institutional competition hindering collaboration and funding of research in preference to 'high quality teaching'. In relaying these 'concerns' and the 'widespread support for the expansion of higher education which has taken place', the Committee demonstrates commitment to its Vision through an engaged, supportive stance. It commends 'justifiable pride' in all that it claims has been 'achieved over the last 30 years. ... through the commitment of those who work in higher education' in the UK. The Report uses the word 'achieve' here and elsewhere (arguably) as a euphemism for (or at least in association with) cost-cutting. Hence—at some risk of appearing ungracious—we may treat its praise as functioning variously to project an aura of voluntary endeavour across three decades. The discursive effect is to establish 'higher education' as a unitary concept through time and to vest its cherished, emaciated body with a quality of potent robustness in response to Governmental husbandry.

The Committee uses no such cultural metaphor yet it is easy to liken its discourse to the figure of an orchard or vineyard, in terms of planting and fertilising, then in due time pruning, tending and harvesting. In that analogy, the surrogate concerns express doubt that recent lopping may have been too harsh, and nourishment too scarce, with consequent damage to the living stock and future harvests (paragraph 13: 'damage the intrinsic quality'). Even without such a parable, the Vision's text works through a double inscription rather than a series of simple messages. Overtly, it makes a case with literal and quantitative rigour (e.g. 'a unit cost reduction of more than 40 per cent over the last 20 years'). At a primary level, it moves the reader in a desired direction by conjuring concepts and relationships and by arousing affective responses largely based on identification, as if we should exclaim: 'Yes—that's what happened; and that's my concern, too!'. For an account of *double inscription* in the work of Joseph Beuys, and further references on that topic, see G.L. Ulmer [1985 p.251]:

> ... In terms of the double inscription, then, Beuys's objects are both what they are (their qualities motivate the concept attached to them) and stimulation for the general processes of memory and imagination. At the primary level, the object does not "transfer a message" but moves the spectator—remaining open in its reference, the object evokes associated memories that are motivated less by the qualities of the object than by the subject of reception ...

We may note in passing that the discourse of the Vision's section *Higher education today* (paragraphs 12-15) makes stepwise (alternating) verbal moves toward exercising later sections of the Report, such as *commending* and *urging* (admonishing), *cutting back* and *growing back*, *competition* and *collaboration*, *attention* and *diversion*.

The wider context (paragraphs 16-22)

Thus far, we have noted an uneven rocking motion, among others, between expansion and cut-back. That motion is the resultant of impulses to shift and to stop, to establish and to topple, while higher education's attention wanders. What is called for is a regular jolt into rhythmic progress, as if to lock-step the institution into a three-legged race with a powerful partner. That jolt comes from what we may call *global competition*, which the Report classifies (in paragraphs 16-17) as 'external changes' and more precisely as 'Powerful forces—technological and political—[that] are driving the economies of the world towards greater integration.' The 'new economic order' of those forces confronts entire countries with a stark Futurist choice of staying or going, action or passivity, responding or remaining mute. [On Futurism, see for instance R. Humphreys 1999] In definitions of *future*, we encounter a fatalist essence of natural inevitability:

> (OHD:) *future* about to happen or be or become...; *futurology* forecasting of future, especially from present trends in society; (Cassell:) *futurus* ... about to be; (Liddell:) *fuw* to produce, beget, bring forth, make to grow; to get, gain; to grow, spring up, come into being, be born or produced; to be by nature; to fall to one by nature

The Committee's Vision is shot through with motifs of Futurist art-work. These include *innovation*, *technology*, *improvement*, *power* and *force*; e.g. of *development* (use of technology to equip and to compete). There are forceful measures (exploiting, driving forces), innovation (in new technologies, especially new uses of communications and information technology) and improvements (putting to use, for effectiveness and efficiency). The Report sounds a clarion call (paragraph 22) that: 'Other countries have reached similar conclusions, and other higher education systems are responding. The UK cannot afford to be left behind.' Higher education thus has to make a business case (paragraph 18) 'to demonstrate that it represents a good investment for individuals and society'. That is because (paragraph 19) 'The world of work is in continual change: individuals will increasingly need to develop new capabilities and to manage their own development and learning throughout life.'

Aims and purposes (paragraph 23)

That jolting display of hubris, a taking-up of extravagant gestures, is abruptly translated in 'the light of ... national needs' to a semblance of Vorticist gyration around an axis of *higher education in the learning society*. In conscious imitation of the Robbins Report in 1963, the Dearing Report's Vision states its purposes in various domains. These comprise the humanist ('personal fulfilment'), cognitive ('knowledge and understanding'), economic ('at local, regional and national levels') and social ('in shaping a democratic, civilised, inclusive society'. Rotation on an axis conserves the Report's alignment, momentum and reason for being. (cf.: '... the conservatism inherent in the Committee's reason for being ...' [D. Robertson 1998 pp.18-19].) We may draw a parallel with Beuys's Actions: the axis of *higher education in the learning society* subtends a literary angle or corner in which the Committee crystallises its malleable material into a shape that registers its text's provenance among durable policy documents. [cf. Beuys's genre of works on *Fat Corner*; for an account of their geometry and disgusting dynamics, if you insist, see G.L. Ulmer 1985 pp.242-8.] From that corner, by passage of time, those stored-up purposes may seep through the corresponding domains of its wider exposition.

Future demand for higher education (paragraphs 26-28)

The supplementary document (with this dissertation) *In the Place of the Address*, in its final section *Higher education and society*, suggests that the Committee projected its mercantile image onto the 'higher education sector' and 'the learning society' in the UK. Here, the economically 'developed nations' or 'advanced economies' are portrayed as a cartel or co-operative to 'the extent of their shared commitment to learning for life', especially as gauged by 'participation in higher education by young people'. (We may note how any disruptive priorities between 'young people' and 'the learning society' or 'lifelong learning' are averted by the ambiguous phrase 'learning for life' in the grandeur of the global Vision.) Thus 'The UK must plan to match the participation rates of other advanced nations: not to do so would weaken the basis of national competitiveness.'

Apart from any supposed links between individual and national prowess, membership of the club of advanced economies is apparently determined by competition through, and enhanced by, a demography of higher education; so 'higher education should resume its growth'. In looking to the future, the Committee enacts the *middle voice*, so to speak, of engagement—an engaging self that is self-engaging—in all its guises. It promotes that which is in its purview (higher education), expresses itself in prophecy (e.g. 'Demand for higher education from people of all ages will continue to grow.') and causes advantageous actions (to educate young people, as our collective posterity). It projects a similar voice of engaging engagement onto the Government by advocating an increase of 'full-time participation by young people' to 'a national average of 45 per cent, or more' to match that of Scotland and Northern Ireland, in its own national (UK) interest. The prescribed aim here is to increase the UK's national standing rather than enforce comparative uniformity among the constituent countries. Hence, no question arises of cruder remedies such as cut-backs to participation rates in Scotland and Northern Ireland, or perhaps dissemination *en masse* of their bright young people to England and Wales.

Widening participation in higher education (paragraphs 29-30)

For this topic, the discourse of advantage is replaced by the language of support for onerous combat, especially through: *cause, group, situation, target, robust strategy, allocate, priority, mechanism, provision, monitor progress, review, achieve* and *encourage*. Stern duty beckons us, in the name of social justice, toward a fight *on behalf of* disadvantaged people. Beyond the market where everyone competes and gains respect commercially, the Committee reaches out to 'those from socio-economic groups III to V, people with disabilities and specific ethnic minority groups'. Though it conveys a sense of wasted potential, the Vision does not give much credit for self-help and agency in this area. Self-control, or if necessary statutory control, is envisaged. Socio-economic groups are to be *represented* on an implied basis of demographic parity. The apparatus of the State must be deployed to coerce the institutions of higher education to 'contribute to improving the situation', many of the causes of which 'lie outside higher education itself'. The play of remaining on margins or progressing (across socio-economic boundaries) through a system is a process of first, faltering steps. The institutions are enjoined to reach out—since there remains no memory of *university outreach*—to recover the situation by taking steps in terms of reporting measures (metrics: rules, rhythms) and numbers, as exemplified by the Committee. They are notably not enjoined to address root

causes, despite such social research and outreach taking place empirically and publicly in each of the decades reviewed by the Committee.

Students and learning (paragraphs 31-35)

'Our vision' proclaims the Report, 'puts students at the centre of the process of learning and teaching.' That situation calls for managers in the place of teachers and tutors. The stated intention here is to bring about '... a change in the values of higher education' away from a system that rewards academic staff's research to one that rewards 'the management of learning and teaching'. (OHD: *manage* handle, wield, control ...; *management* trickery, deceit, administration of business concerns or public undertakings, ...) This involves a revaluation of students to become *investors* in higher education and of academic staff to become *professional teachers*. For instance, a member of a chemistry department might formerly be called a *lecturer* and-or a *research chemist* of a particular speciality within academic circles around the world. Those specific notions of academic profession would be supplemented or replaced—through individual *accreditation*—by a ranking of 'professional achievement in the management of learning and teaching'.

This notion seems oddly reminiscent of the civil service principle of transferability and interchangeability rather than specialism. In the former, a person becomes a graded commodity or resource occupying (for the time being) a post on the organisation's complement of staff. Since that definition seems somewhat mechanical, or to lend itself to mechanisation, we need not be surprised to read the report's call for 'institutions to exploit the potential of communications and information technology for learning and teaching'. The desired direction is toward processes embodied in technology. Perhaps initially there is a sense of know-how, yet the process is amenable to electronic mechanisation. Such processes would 'enhance and support learning' in students' academic work, career guidance and 'in other areas' also, all toward a 'national objective' of the UK's 'world class' standing in the management of those activities.

Whereas the recommendations for the section on *Widening participation in higher education* only seek to adapt the Funding Bodies' allocation of funds to institutions, those for *Students and Learning* propose a whole new professional body: an Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. That body would be established 'immediately' to accredit, research, develop, innovate, co-ordinate and lead institutions' practices and materials for learning and teaching. Since such institutes once established are stubbornly difficult to get rid of, we may treat this as a proposal to incorporate that vital part of the Inquiry's Vision in perpetuity. The hasty investiture suggests a pretender's grab for a royal crown, perhaps, or a viceregal move to block interlopers. In institutional terms we may ask whether it seeks to inaugurate a memorial to a named philosophy, in the manner of the Adam Smith Institute. Yet the practical effects of this move may be less to perpetuate a mentality than to concentrate resources.

The ploy attempts to embody an aspect of the social compact that aligns higher education ever more closely with central government. As we shall see later, the Committee makes other proposals to review and update its findings, so as to protect them from stagnation. Rather than enshrining private experiences, the Report seeks to arrange public affairs and objective problems. Yet the Committee does impart a signature that bears the imprints or traces of a multitude of experiences. Through its performance of appointment (when summoned into being), Inquiry (a grand hearing) and Report (a resounding

finale) it enacts a kind of *autography* ('self-writing') without an individual identity but with echoes of many voices.

> Aside: For a brief comparison of the *autography* in Derrida's 'deconstructed self' and 'signature' with that in Beuys's 'idiomatic and impersonal' practice of shamanism, see G.L. Ulmer 1985 [p.289].

The Committee's ecstatic performance sought through its meticulous example to impart the spirit of inquiry to become manifest in our *praxis* of self-writing, down the scroll of generations.

The nature of programmes (paragraphs 36-41)

> At one level ... the Dearing Report is an attempt to re-invent the functional role of the polytechnics ... and [to lever] in a more occupationally-focused, standards-driven, teaching-only curriculum. [D. Robertson 1998 p.19]

The previous sections on disadvantaged groups and specialist staff have depleted the Report's prescriptive energy, so this section taps into some invigorating 'messages' from 'employers'. The topic and motive of *employment*—as the sole end of the process of higher education—afford a familiar respite from perplexities. Employment wraps those issues up in itself, so to speak. (OHD: *employ* from *implicor* to be involved; Cassell: *implico*, ...—*in* and *plico*—to enfold, entangle, cling to, confuse, perplex; to weave around, surround.) The busy Committee exemplifies the messages that this section relays: prior work experience, effectiveness from their first day, immediate development, critical analysis, communicative skills and breadth of topics; whilst it portrays a mosaic of specialisms in its public face.

Strictly within its remit, the Inquiry puts matters to the test, exercises judgement and pronounces verdicts. (cf. Raymond Williams's *Keywords* [1988 pp.84-86] on the development of *criticism, critic and critical*: '... the assumption of judgement as the predominant and even natural response.') The '**key** skills' [*sic*, emphasis in original] are universally prescribed as 'necessary outcomes of all higher education programmes'.

> Aside: This instance of the word 'key', to qualify *skills*, is the only *ad-hoc* word in the Summary Report that appears in bold type. However all of the 'key' recommendations are set in bold type to distinguish them from the Report's numbered paragraphs. Locking and unlocking is boldly highlighted.

Thus a set of courses cannot constitute a programme of higher education in their absence. Without '**key** skills', the attached courses may be counted as inaccessible, perhaps *lower* or *non-educational*, or simply ignored.

This *key* move inaugurates a series of acts of historical prescription. A 'programme specification' should identify intended outcomes at potential stopping-off points. A 'Progress File' in a national format should transcribe each student's *achievements* (performances, feats) 'for use throughout life'. Despite the mutual elements of 'life' and layout, there are staggering differences between such a recording file and a *curriculum vitae* (literally a life-course—a running, a contest or a heavenly orbit—as represented in autobiography). In a Progress File, paradoxically, *progress* is selectively fixed and rendered. It lacks the taken-for-granted quality of direction ('of course') of a *vita*; life is sutured in retrospect from

certified episodes. The individual must stagger through bouts of education and of employment, whereas the institutions are programmed to inscribe and endorse our chief end in a mantra that enshrines their own chief end and that of the Committee: education and training *for employment*.

Qualifications and standards (paragraphs 42-51)

> At no point in the text of the report do matters of lifelong learning achieve greater prominence than the quest for levers of control. This is the real vision of the Dearing report. [David Robertson, 1998 pp.12-13]

The Quality Assurance Agency is tasked with inventorying assets and performances in higher education. From the text of the Vision, we may read off the parties co-opted by the Committee to prepare, monitor and comply with that cycle of stock-taking. A prime source of anxiety in the Inquiry's remit is that the quality of educational awards has been degraded by the huge expansion of student numbers and the franchising (granting a right of usage) of courses.

> Aside: OHD: *franchise* right to vote, full membership, right or privilege, cf. *frank* candid, to mark; OED: free in condition; not in serfdom or slavery; from mediæval Latin: *francus* free, of full freedom in Frankish Gaul.

The Agency would see to it that every institution formally adopted a code of practice for qualifications and standards by year 2001/2. (paragraph 48) 'The whole academic community' would accept 'shared responsibility' for 'the general standard of awards'. (paragraph 49) That endorsement would gain credence (belief, confidence, trust) in the processes and outcomes of *achievement, progression, credit accumulation* and *transfer*. It would maintain a hierarchical 'framework' for grading students' achievements below, at and above each level of qualification, in a fully commensurate manner across subject areas, course durations and kinds of institution.

> Aside: If there is a spirit of limitation and contrivance at work here, it may be smuggled in etymologically by *compass*, as in paragraph 43: 'The framework ... encompasses vocational and academic qualifications.' and Recommendation 24: 'encompassed in a code of practice'. (OHD: *compass* instrument showing direction ...; boundary, scope; (archaic) *to detour* (*fetch a compass*); (literary) encompass, contrive, accomplish, ...

Several directive actions take place here. These involve designation, with components of inspection, identification and appointment. 'Professional bodies' would participate in 'establishing the standards appropriate to their discipline'. (paragraph 51) That is a long recognised suggestion, as we may infer from Immanuel Kant's gyrations around the matter of 'the *businessmen* or technicians of learning' [I. Kant 1979 p.25, emphasis in original] (i.e. professional practitioners; expressed mainly in relation to the truth of content rather than standards of entry). The Agency would ensure compliance of UK institutions' franchising arrangements with criteria that it would specify using explicit pointers in the Report. (paragraph 46 and Recommendation 23) The Agency, 'with universities and other degree-awarding institutions' would designate 'a UK-wide pool of [recognised] external examiners'. (Recommendation 25) 'Individuals' would build up 'a portfolio of achievements at a range of levels over a working lifetime'. (OHD: *portfolio* a case for loose drawings, ...; list of investments ..., office of minister of State, from *profogli* sheet-carrier.) This would be based

precisely on the institutional system of commensurate awards yet accommodate disparate and loosely related items.

At the nub of the Vision's anxiety over qualifications and standards, and its inflation of the Agency, lies the international reputation of the three year honours degree, which 'is short by world standards' and whose 'international acceptability depends on the quality of the learning experience and high standards for awards'. (paragraph 47) In terms of the 'wider yet deeper' formula of the Vision, and in keeping with the Inquiry's economic remit, we might expect the honours degree to be extended to four years (which is already the case in Scotland) or more. Rather, a technology of codifying and measurement is proposed to make up for the shortage of duration. That technology is somehow also supposed to compensate for lack of the educational experience that comes about through opportunity for reflection on content and by way of instructive encounters.

With this topic, the Inquiry's Vision renews itself with prescriptive force. In Beuysian symbolism, it requires a universal gold standard for degrees, fashioned into a cellular framework for harmoniously storing and telling of the abundant goodness of learning. (cf. Jacques Derrida's critique of Friedrich von Schelling's *harmonious conformity of the hive* [J. Derrida 1984a p.7; about Schelling see e.g. A. Bowie 2001].) We shall take a detour through the Inquiry's stance on compliance before addressing that prescriptive force directly. Thus far, we have taken at face value the compliant posture that the Inquiry demonstrates through its Report. [NCIHE 1997 pp.5-6] To be fair, the Committee was—or chose and claimed to be—tethered by its remit. However far it quested and deeply it inquired, its detouring consummated a union with the grounds of its being as held aloft in the Terms of Reference.

> Aside: Beyond all adversity, the Vision's compliance dissolves into the pre-ordained rapture of perfect complicity. Its calling, appointment and commitment are always already formed and subsumed by its hour of vindication in fulfilment. Its gathering gathers itself in(to) that end *(telos)*. This apocalyptic tone exaggerates by way of respectful imitation, not of mockery or pillaging. In the Vision's phrase, we arrive at a partial 'stopping-off point' in understanding at which we remain silent before the Committee's revealed devotion, even as we appear to take a critical detour around it.

Perhaps we can discern an obsessive and pre-occupied (possessed) quality in the Inquiry's show of compliance. This is an empirical conjecture, within this dissertation's own obsessive mode of thinking about a remnant of a recent historical document. On historical grounds, we might adduce regular precedents and particular adversities to explain such a tone. Yet in a sense, such analysis would also support a Peircian explanation that follows below, in terms of protective habit-formation against surprises. In its demonstrative conformance, the Inquiry reveals a reality that it knows must impinge on the object of its compassion, the student, and on the student's mentor and guardian: the institution of higher education. Each of these must impinge on the other. (OHD: impact, encroach; from *pango* to fix) In modern parlance, this realist Committee's aim is to exercise damage limitation by way of support and encouragement, and above all by way of example. Through a pragmatic yielding to the contradictory pressures of governmental intervention and the market, the Inquiry demonstrates with its distressed public body, so to speak, the sole means to a kind of survival: a living-on in adverse, changing conditions. By inscribing an unchanging situation of adversity and change, by fulfilling the given Terms of Reference, by partaking in the Inquiry's faithful performance of its script, the Vision bears witness to the efficacy of that sole way and means.

At first, the immediate, uninterpreted implementation of its just mission appears to contradict C.S. Peirce's dictum that *interpretation takes place all the time* [as cited by Simon Morgan Wortham 1999 from Samuel Weber 1987 p.17] in an interplay of pragmatism and habits of tradition. Yet the Inquiry renders its mission in a style of emphatic and punctual *compliance*. The exactitude of its ritual performance guarantees its perfect accomplishment. (OHD: *accomplishment* an acquired, socially-useful ability; Cassell: *compleo* to perfect, complete) Anticipating adverse governmental and public response to any shortfall, excess or deviation on its part, the Inquiry resorts to defensive self-control in delimiting its habitual behaviour with extravagant (beyond the bounds) compliance.

This makes sense, albeit of a dysfunctional kind, in Peirce's interpretive model of human defences instituted against surprise. After all, the governmental instigators of its Terms of Reference were hardly likely to prove as omniscient or meticulous as the Inquiry's behaviour might suggest. By the time of reckoning the Conservative and Labour participants in the Whitehall system might have been swept out of power or be locked into a political programme (negotiated in return for a return to power; a calculated trade-off). In place of such punctual self-control, continuous interpretation of demands might seem wholly oriented to the market. It would constitute a fully sold-out example of conformance to the political market's demands—in this case, for policy proposals but more urgently for political deferral: to buy time, to put off public debate while appearing to entertain it.

Yet the Vision's posture of self-enclosure in a given world of enthralment with its remit also answers to some archaic forms, such as the academy's reversion to traditional scholarship or the gesture of brief 'work experience' toward apprenticeship. (The idea of reversion to scholarship will be discussed briefly in *Supporting Scholarship and Research*, below.) By associating so closely with its Terms of Reference, then, the Inquiry's Report also dissociates from itself (as situated in its grounds for being) to enact an excellent conformance to established *standards* through the technology of *quality assurance*.

If we have taken a long detour to reach this verdict, perhaps this mimics the Inquiry. It does not take the shortest route from remit to report; its performance has to allude to any number of quite contrary models and interests before its accomplishment accomplishes, so to speak. In short, drawing on Bill Readings's figure of *technology*: the Inquiry's play of *conformity* and *extravagance* enacts in exemplary style an inclusive excellence through its technology's reflection on itself. [cf. Bill Readings 1993 p.169]

Something is out of joint in this discourse. The authors cited above—Charles Sanders Peirce, Samuel Weber, Simon Morgan Wortham, Bill Readings and Gregory Ulmer—and Joseph Beuys and Jacques Derrida, for that matter—speak of *the university* rather than *higher education*. (Admittedly, there are sound historical and cultural reasons for that being the case.) The Inquiry's Vision rarely, and then only of necessity, mentions the university. Its primary object of concern when cradling the student is the higher educational system or sector. We can construe that as a set of institutions so designated and-or a process subject to criteria of 'level' of educational content. In either case, that visionary discourse has been contaminated (Cassell: *contamino—com* and *tango* or *tago, tact*— infected, touched, mentioned, prepared) by a alien (to itself) mode of thinking.

We could attempt definitions to delimit *the university* within a *higher education sector* (including particular colleges, or activities sanctioned at colleges of further education). Indeed, there is no end to those categorical debates and no such detour will be attempted here.

> Aside: Educationalists who have recently wrestled with these matters of goals and quality include Patrick Ainley, Michael Allen, Ronald Barnett, William Birch, Sinclair Goodlad, Peter Scott, Harold Silver with Pamela Silver, and Graham Webb.

We thus comply with the Inquiry's iconoclastic Vision of 'the historic boundaries between vocational and academic education breaking down', though perhaps not with its desired outcomes. The morass of institutional naming will recur in the section *The pattern of institutions which provide higher education* below. Here we simply note that such debates revolve around matters of *qualifications and standards*, to which topic we now return. For a recent overview of the aversions and power struggles around *quality*, see John Brennan's *Introduction*, [1997 pp.1-9] e.g. on p.9:

> ... As with quality, dispute over terminology concerning standards is also a dispute about values, and the power of one interest group to impose its values on others.

John Brennan points out that some differences of interest are simply irreconcilable. [J. Brennan 1997 p.9.] Thus there exists an inherent tension, in the juxtaposing phrase *qualifications and standards*, between *quality* and *standard*. Here *quality* may be understood popularly as referring to excellence rather than identifying any attribute whatsoever.

> Aside: OHD: *quality* degree of excellence, relative nature, attribute, faculty, social standing; OED: character; ability, or skill; Cassell: *qualis* (from *poios*) what sort, what kind of; a quality or property; just as. Also in OHD: *standard* measure, specification, object, etc. to which others (should) conform and against which others are judged, criterion of performance (as *conformance* to specification).

The sense of *standards* is about precision. That tension between *quality* and *standards* confers a rigidity and resistance to questioning as to its tensility or plasticity, so to speak; strain it too far and it will shatter. The remit, in the Committee's Terms of Reference, stands like an engraved slab guarding the Inquiry's public performance from mid-1996 to mid-1997. In its vigil it affords shelter from the perplexities that threaten to disrupt the show. Then we are given the monumental Report, even though we are liable to be perplexed and to misread its intentions. Hence we are also given a re-formed guide, in the figure of the Quality Assurance Agency, to prompt and invigilate our ongoing performance also.

This stern invigilator of quality is equipped with the 'apparatus' to enforce its task, yet as we have noted, what the Vision desires is willing compliance. Thus, 'To the extent that higher education adopts these recommendations, the need for the apparatus of quality assessment and audit by the Quality Assurance Agency will be correspondingly reduced.' (paragraph 50) The Inquiry proposes to equip the Agency with a plethora of administrative technologies to oversee matters in the Vision's purview, its colossal circus ring. These include a framework of qualifications (based on the Scottish model), specification of 'criteria for franchising arrangements', 'benchmarking' of standards (involving 'participation by professional bodies'), accreditation of academic staff plus procedures for handling complaints and procedures for granting degree-awarding powers. (Recommendations 24-25) David Robertson [1998 p.15] notes this variety and given-ness as follows:

> ... the fledgling Quality Assurance Agency, a state- and employer-dominated body into the gift of which the Dearing Report delivers countless responsibilities. [1998 p.15]

To explain the armoury (arsenal, workshop) of controls, we must view their object, higher education, as an implacable foe, impervious to reasonable entreaty.

On the other hand, we should seek ways of reviving the life of learning in the undoubtedly changed conditions toward which the Vision gestures. Here the Vision's demands become divided between playing to the Agency's script (as prompter and producer-critic) and to the audience (market, gallery). The Vision seeks to institute practices of *quality* (in qualifications and standards) so that they become habitual, in an effortlessly dissociated role or second nature. A calculatedly minimal level of compliance would not fulfil the Vision abundantly. The Inquiry's exemplary, almost extravagant performance prompts us to exceed its horizon of view, through some exemplary extravagance in return. For such a *tour de force* (feat of strength or skill) we may pursue the notion of 'corporate-style excellence' in an institution of higher education: dereferentialised, without an *idea* or content, in a mode of pure performance. This pursuit, and the references to Bill Readings below, tentatively transpose Simon Morgan Wortham's account of Samuel Weber's *university of excellence* (pursuing postmodern self-interest). This is contrasted with the *habitually thinking* university (cultured, self-grounded, self-contained, Cartesian). The performance involves self-reference that is bureaucratic (efficient and impersonal) and technocratic (led by those who understand the processes of production). The purely formal relation of the university to its own performance involves a doubling and splitting of identity that disorients us as to actor and role.

Alongside that forked line of thinking through (Samuel) Weber-Readings-Wortham, we may note stronger affinities of the mode of performance with some parts of the institution than with others. For instance it has diverse affinities with institutional management and administration, with the business school, among educational technologists and learning support services. Perhaps it also shows affinity with the drama school and with cultural studies where the arts of representation are the daily objects of scrutiny and practice. These departments and services engage in (Cartesian) self-guaranteeing practices as much as others. However we may well imagine them to be less perturbed by the demand for public performance than other kinds of department and service, or in some cases specially adept at it.

The capacity for separating performance from substance (delivery from content) runs counter to, or at least falls well short of, the Vision's demand for responsive accountability suffused across the institution. For satisfactory accounting, all goods and services must be rendered as being commensurable (for the Agency) and as commodities (for the market). They must not be presented separately from each other and from some ineffable *content*, but seamlessly in a pure act of performance-delivery. If the content is separately identifiable and requires some critical faculty to discern it, even in novel guises, then it has to be pushed out of the institution. Perhaps such separable content's *delivery* must be transferred to the control of private interests in cultural content across an academia-society continuum enhanced through the adjacent continuum of Internet-broadcast-media.

Sadly for the Vision, that move to deliver the goods privately would incur disruption on an inherently public stage, even as private interests strove to appropriate modes of thinking from the recesses of the academic labyrinth. It would acquire the status of a *cause célèbre*, and attract attributes of excellence. Objects of a desire that the Vision could no longer hide even from itself would become publicly evident. We may here fantasise a pre-emptive statute to limit the

removal of critical and productive resources from academic to private (though publicly accessible) domains, adapted from rules governing intellectual property. The prospect of an unseemly legal scramble to loot academic resources would drive a rush to identify, measure, schedule, classify, grade, sample, systematise, etc., anything that moves or stands still, whether material or abstract, anywhere in the strategically marketised, higher educational sector. We may recognise that preposterous notion as the idea toward which the section *Qualifications and standards* of the Vision aspires.

Supporting scholarship and research (paragraphs 52-60)

The title of this section deftly hobbles the academy's feet, as it were, with the unbalanced fetters of *scholarship* and *research*. The resulting tension reflects that of Jacques Derrida's call in his *The Principle of Reason* ... [1984a p.26] for a new Enlightenment, of thinking both *memory* and *chance* in a responsibility to 'the strange destiny of the university'. Scholarship presumably embraces tradition, whilst research seeks 'to add to the sum of human knowledge and understanding' and 'to generate useful knowledge and inventions in support of wealth creation and an improved quality of life'. (paragraph 52) That binding-together yields a convenient object for 'supporting' by way of funding, which is what this section is mainly about. That act of support encourages researchers and solicits research to underpin teaching activities within an environment of information and training.

The rationale for an increase in funding is based on economic value: 'The importance of the research base to the national economy, and its cost-effectiveness ...'. (paragraph 53) The principles for offering support invoke 'clear and transparent mechanisms' for distributing funds, for support of excellence and for ensuring adequacy of funding. That adequacy would embrace full indirect costs, whenever funding was to be awarded. (paragraph 54 & Recommendation 34) Broadly, institutions would decide whether to compete for funds in the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) or 'to seek a lower level of non-competitive funding to support research and scholarship which underpins teaching'. (paragraph 56) An emphatic theme of *partnership* promotes *joint, collaborative* and *interdisciplinary* activities. (paragraph 58: The specific arrangements to be encouraged include 'funding from industry and international institutions', those for 'valued partners with overseas institutions', partnerships between industry and higher education, joint financing by 'public and private research sponsors' and an 'Industrial Partnership Development Fund ... to attract matching funds from industry'.) Almost as asides, the section proposes 'the establishment of an Arts and Humanities Research Council' and (endorsing the Harris Committee's [1996] Review of Postgraduate Education) 'a code of practice to guide institutions and inform students on what they can reasonably expect'. (paragraphs 59 & 60)

The latter two items attached to the economic edicts resonate with the Vision's drive to establish codified practices. We can apply that impulse or principle to the Vision's agenda as conditional for making up for past under-funding of research infrastructure. That agenda includes a will to classify and stratify institutions as being *world class research establishments* on the one hand and *teaching establishments* with sufficient research to 'underpin' teaching on the other. Yet to do so would run counter the Vision's expressed aim of *world class learning and teaching*. (paragraphs 3 & 70) We may surmise that the Vision's intensity is dimmed here by an anxiety on the part of the Inquiry not to allow further threat or damage to the research capabilities and renown of the UK.

Perhaps funding and lyrics cannot co-exist comfortably in a policy proposal. At any rate, the Vision here fails to amplify a spontaneous 'middle voice' (whereby *culture acculturates* (itself)) elsewhere in the Report. For instance, it rhapsodises 'fostering culture for its own sake' (paragraph 8), 'knowledge and understanding for their own sake' (paragraph 23) and so forth. *Study*, let alone *research* and the barely-acknowledged activity of *scholarship*, appears rather dutiful. It lacks any vestige of zeal or passion, other than respect at some distance. (Cassell: *study* from *studium* zeal, eagerness, eager application, assiduity, fondness, desire, striving after; application to learning.) There may be something too disturbing for the Vision in the prospect of anyone fixated on the object of their study, as being obsessed, lost to the world, impervious—perhaps even callous—to the social demands of others.

In C.S. Peirce's model, that fixation on responsibility to an object of study would amount to a defensive move we encountered above. By it, the academy exercises self-control for self-preservation (survival) in anticipation of market disciplines. Such a retreat seems pathological even from an academic viewpoint, since it institutes new, delimiting and debilitating habits to replace those of engagement with worldly ends and objects of study. [cf. Simon Morgan Wortham 1999 paragraph 5 in relation to Robert Young's discussion of *useless* and *useful learning* in R. Rand 1992] Yet it serves to liberate the researcher or scholar into a self-contained, self-grounded domain of reference in a particular discipline. Within that domain, it can deal with universal absolutes of theoretical and empirical truth, thus preserving its situated culture intact against the threatened ravages of market-oriented and perhaps also political forms of activity. That habitual thinking in a dereferentialised, defensive culture is what Simon Morgan Wortham [1999 paragraph 2] suggests that Bill Readings [1996 p.39] may be reinforcing against postmodern self-interest and the performativity of 'technology's self-reflection' in particular. We will now consider the two 'radical forms of ambivalence' that Wortham suggests might provide some tenuous purchase in a *university of excellence* (i.e. in his terms: without any universal, uniting *idea*).

The first form of ambivalence is the possibility of a 'community of dissensus', given to 'thinking without identity'. [Bill Readings 1996 p.127] By promoting thinking without a common identity, such an anomalous community would be entirely compatible with the devices of a university of excellence. [S. Morgan Wortham 1999 chapter 3, especially pp.80-88 relating to Peggy Kamuf 1997] At the same time, academic members of such a university could pursue their specialised interests without interference. Insofar as those interests would remain incommensurate with each other, they would (in Wortham's account) remain systematically incapable of closure, by keeping the matter of evaluation always open. The community of dissensus would thus transvalue the values inherent to processes of excellence. We may note that a theme of transvaluation inhabits the utopian, technological tradition of *the learning society* that the Dearing Report's title invokes. Yet as Robert Hutchins points out, a transformation of values depends upon itself for the conditions of its coming into being [R.M. Hutchins 1968 pp.134-6]:

> A world community learning to be civilized, learning to be human, is at last a possibility. ... Machines can do for every modern man *[sic]* what slavery did for the fortunate few in Athens. The vision of the learning society, or, as Sir Julian Huxley has put it, the fulfillment society, can be realized. Education may have come into its own.

The Transvaluation of Values

> Whether it does or not depends on the transformation of values. All that technology can do is to provide the opportunity. In the transformation of values, education plays a role. A society in which everybody has begun a liberal education in educational institutions and is continuing liberal learning either in such institutions or outside them, a society in which there are true universities, centers of independent thought and criticism, is one in which values may be transformed. But, as we have observed, it is one in which values have already been transformed: otherwise this concept of education could not have been accepted. ... educational institutions have been designed largely to perpetuate existing values. ... The first step is general understanding of the facts of life of the new values that are now attainable, and of the possibilities and limitations of education in helping to achieve them.
> ...
> Such a transvaluation also invokes Friedrich Nietzsche's call 'for a "transvaluation of values" according to which "the will to power" as the basic principle of life will lead to the development of a higher type of humanity.' [Ed L. Miller 1996 pp.406-7]

The transvaluation happens by surprise rather than through a culture of reason. Perhaps the forceful, focused pragmatics of excellence—in the guise of *quality assurance*, as observed above—itself provides the cultural jolt needed for such a shift of values. The intensity of that ethos might shock the preservative system much more than the routine treatment of academic knowledge and interests as commodities of exchange in a marketplace with all other goods and services. Yet that purist intensity renders the dogma of *quality* and *excellence* implausible and fragile at a time when the fashionable, reformist zeal of *quality assurance* in industry has arguably merged into bureaucratic and technocratic procedure.

Perhaps a community of dissensus could be produced instead through a defensive adaptation of the movement for excellence in the encounter (with the academic specialisms) that the Dearing Vision avoids. For lack of commensurable commodities, the procedures of excellence might condense around *diversity*, a quality toward which the Vision gestures as something to be conserved. A culture of excellent incommensurability and incommensurable excellence might thus come into being wherever the campaign of quality encountered entrenched scholarship. Here we must recall that Wortham's object of inquiry is *the university*, whereas that of the Dearing Vision is *higher education*. The difference of orientation suggests a complex working-out of potentials and a probing of outflanking movements, to test the relative strengths of scholarship and bureaucratic mission. The drive for excellence could harness tenuous scholarly interests to support teaching or drive scholarship out to other institutions or none, whilst vigorous scholarship could embrace and enliven the game of excellence to suit its own academic ends.

The second of Wortham's 'radical forms of ambivalence' is that of a *differentiation of processes of institution*, to afford a tenuous hold on the university of excellence. [S. M. Wortham 2000 paragraph 8] This postulates a pragmatic practice of iterative *experiment* to articulate the singular in a Kierkegaardian mode of sensibility.

> Aside: On Søren Kierkegaard, see for instance P.A. Angeles [1992 p.156]:
>
> 'Kierkegaard's ... confronting of emotions ... based on a dualism of thought and reality, faith and knowledge, God and the individual, subjectivity and objectivity, personal truth and institutional truth. ...'
>
> also Ed L Miller [1996 p.202]:

'... distrust of the notion that man's essence is to be a knower of essences ...; dubious about progress, and especially about the latest claim that such-and-such a discipline has at last made the nature of human knowledge so clear that reason will now spread throughout the rest of human activity. ... we may have no more than conformity to the ... norms of the day; kept alive the historicist sense that this century's "superstition" was the last century's triumph of reason, as well as the relativist sense that the latest vocabulary, borrowed from the latest scientific achievement, may not express privileged representations of essences, but be just another of the potential infinity of vocabularies in which the world can be described ... edifying *[versus]* systematic philosophy...

[Peripheral pragmatic philosophers such as Kierkegaard] are skeptical primarily about systematic philosophy, about the whole project of universal commensuration ...'

As Wortham comments, [S. M. Wortham 1999, from my notes] such an experimental approach links into Samuel Weber's question of *theatre* [in his essay *The Future of the Humanities: Experimenting* in G. Hall 2000] as an expression of possibility, irreducible to dramatic narrative. That which is *already to come* inhabits a double, fractured temporality; it ruptures a notion of self-identical origin (e.g. performance or audience, in a singular event). The Dearing Vision enacts such a splitting and doubling of time and identity on the illusory fulcrum or anvil (so to speak) of its date of publication, July 1997. The actions and states of affairs that it projects (cantilevers) into future time-frames are to be recognised in originary, historical visions that draw on earlier visions, and so forth; always, already *to come*. In a performance—or rather, *our* performance—of a Beuysian Action, a play by Antonin Artaud or a poem by Stéphane Mallarmé, the *event-we* nexus conjures an untimely rupture of commensurate relations. In academia, that rupture would value intense sensibility to sublime experience at the expense of accomplishing the effable (an outspoken expression, as in the Dearing Vision). Its ambivalence would thus subvert the drive to excellence; that is, to identify, codify and render all things commensurate.

Aside: Before we leave the topic of research and scholarship, we should reflect—in keeping with the section on *Sensibilities* in chapter 4, *Approach* above—on this chapter's reliance on lexicons. Simon Morgan Wortham's [1999 pp.73-80] critique of Bill Readings's book *The University in Ruins* [1996] queries its apparent reinforcement of the academy's Cartesian closure on itself.

Similarly this chapter's frequent resort to glosses and dictionary definitions—linguistic, literary, political, etc.—tries to convey an aura of helpfulness, particularly to readers for whom its English vocabulary is unfamiliar. Yet it brings in too much meaning and over-helpfully disseminates its interpretation across too many words, languages and periods. It does so, reprehensibly, to put traces of foreign and archaic meanings and usages into play in its commentary.

The impression that resort to the exotic leaves is archly scholastic, extravagant and complicated (as in this sentence) beyond the bounds of helpful hinting or proper explanation. We can try to excuse the use of glosses, lexicon entries and dramatic allusions as making less obscure the use of a technical vocabulary for critical analysis. We may also cite the extent to which the Dearing Report is written in Latinate English as the bureaucratic 'mandarin' (officialese) language of policy proposals in the UK. That mode of discourse provides a recognisable framework of policy-oriented thinking, even when the documents concerned are translated into Welsh, Gaelic, Hindi, etc. (just as for a native

French speaker, in French it would still be *une version anglaise*—an English account). Yet Wortham's witness marks a still point at which this exoticism has no adequate response. Thus the essay of this present chapter betrays (discloses, lets down) the habitual, technical thinking of the academy, even (or, for Readings's community of dissensus, especially) if its somewhat deconstructive manner of doing so is not widely endorsed across academic disciplines.

Here, we need to be cautious of the notion of *the university* in Wortham's, (Samuel) Weber's and Readings's lines of inquiry. Wortham suggests tentative, ambivalent escape routes from the bind of either reinforcing or surrendering to the university of excellence. The latter is viewed as a community of consensus—akin to C.S. Peirce's community of investigators—and of differentiation of processes of institution. [Samuel Weber 1987 p.13] Both of Wortham's escape routes (*dissensus* and *differentiation*) rely on affinity, short of object-fixation, between the academic inquirer and the topic of inquiry through research and scholarship. Disaffection, by way of indifference or distaste, would mar either sort of ambivalence. Distracting and distancing pressures could induce disaffection; those pressures might arise from excessive bureaucracy and mediation through technologies, including unrealistic expectations enforced through quality assurance.

A realistic view of *the university* as constituted of diverse forms of institution, some at times more robust, dynamic and self-confident than others, would suggest that the potentials for these two radical forms of ambivalence would vary across and within universities. [e.g. as sketched in Tony Becher 1989] As with the prospects for *incommensurable excellence* above, these would tend to correlate with the extent and intensity of scholarship, and the reputation for research. That conjecture would apply more firmly to the Dearing Inquiry's wider view of a *higher education system* and *sector*, in line with the Vision's polarity between extremes of research (entwined with teaching) and teaching (with research sufficient only to underpin it).

By naming the higher education sector and projecting several evaluative grids (frameworks, meshes) across its activities, the Vision imposes an appearance of certainty (judgement). It restricts opportunities for ambivalence to sites having the confidence and resources to treat those grids as gaming-tables for control of the evaluative stakes of excellence—i.e. the power to capture and subvert the rules of play. An element of surprise appears to be implicated, perhaps surprising (by spontaneously announcing) itself in a reflexive middle voice. These conjectures may be premature since we have yet to consider several sections of the Vision; yet that gives us a focus for briefly examining the remaining topics.

At the end of this topic, the Vision has negotiated its discomfort around *scholarship*, and established that *research* is *oriented* to application and information. That orientation is toward sustaining a 'world class' reputation for the UK.

> Aside: Here *orientation* is used in the dynamic sense that Jacques Derrida employs [1984a], especially in pp.13-18: '... what is called the "orientation" *(finalisation)* of research'. He uses *information* in an active sense: pp.18-19 'The concept of information or informatization ...'.

The Vision is at this point poised to extend that orientation to the most local of controls and information-trading networks.

The local and regional role of higher education (paragraphs 61-64)

> Whether we like it or not, the evolution of higher education in Britain has followed other areas of public policy toward being shaped almost entirely by national considerations. The latest phase with its emphasis on the market and national standards to produce a hierarchy of universities, pays no attention directly to the economic and social development needs of different parts of the country. From a regional perspective we would not start from here.
>
> ... If nothing else, greater emphasis on regionalism will be another nail in the coffin of a system of institutional management based around a single funder, annual allocations, recruitment of 18 year-olds and a producer led culture in terms of teaching and research. [John Goddard, 1999]

'In England, regional consciousness varies ...'. (paragraph 61) In its context, rather than toward splits in a national psyche or an unstable collective mentality, this remark appears to declare a tendency for institutions in England to be less often involved in local matters than institutions in the rest of the UK. The Vision commits higher education to the role of a contributor to local prosperity and cultural activity thus: 'each institution should be clear about its mission to local communities and regions'. That mission binds an institution into a primarily economic network of regional government, development agencies, further education committees and enterprises (by informing them of higher educational services). Whilst the cultural ties would promote 'quality of life' and 'lifelong learning' beyond that of economic 'force', (paragraphs 61-62) institutions are enjoined to inject economic values into their corporate body, so to speak, by 'foster[ing] entrepreneurship among students and staff'. (paragraph 64)

Here, in an implicit middle voice, the *Committee committees* by way of *contributions*. (This 'is yet another gloss on Derrida's aphorism, language languages' [J.T. Martin 1996]) *Contribution* provides a pivotal concept for leverage between a universal notion of research and the most situated of social relations. It thus realises the economic bonds of mission, obligation and responsibility inscribed in the Vision's *compact* among higher education and its approved social relatives. Contribution happens, to affirm the gathering of the tribes. Yet the horizon (OHD: boundary of mental outlook) of the act of contribution appears uncertain, hazy. The scope of an institution's activity is formulated as broadly 'local and regional' in 'the localities and wider areas in which they are situated' (paragraph 61). However it is also located in dimensions of *economy* and *application* (e.g. in paragraph 57 of the previous section: 'applied and regional research work', and 'contribute to regional and economic development').

There is no suggestion here that an institution might be excused from a local role on the basis of its 'world class' contribution, or perhaps excused a cultural dimension in view of its commercial and industrial links. Rather, the expected scope of contribution might vary on all fronts along a spectrum of *local—regional—world*. That variability and irreconcilable tension are inherent to debates over *higher education, the university* and *the learning society*, as R. M. Hutchins prophesied at the end of a critique [1968 p.119]:

> *The Prospects*

> The theme of this essay has been that in the twenty-first century education may at last come into its own. This chapter can offer little evidence that the university may do so. The tendencies all over the world suggest rather that the university will cease to be an autonomous intellectual community, a center of independent thought and criticism, and will become a nationalized industry. ... This field has produced a lush crop of doubletalk. A contemporary scholar [here Hutchins is citing HRW Benjamin 1965] has no difficulty in saying that a university must be a service station for its community and at the same time an international organization; an institution focused on the immediate needs of its immediate environment and at the same time engaged in the study of "universally applicable principles or the development of universally valid scholarship."

The Vision extends a notion akin to pupillage (OHD: cf. *nonage* being under age, minority; immaturity) through controls on information from students to local firms, 'especially small and medium sized enterprises' and back to students and staff in terms of 'entrepreneurship'. That circular movement contributes well to the Vision's panorama of 'the historic boundaries between vocational and academic education breaking down'. (paragraph 3) At first sight, it would appear to obstruct or at least to complicate the scope for Simon Morgan Wortham's mooted ambivalences in the community of dissensus. [Bill Readings 1996 p.127] It might also complicate processes of institution—does a centre emerge from an educational department, or detach itself from the contributing companies? On the other hand, in middle-voiced Beuysian imagery, that move shifts and problematises matters of dependency and pedagogy, of attention and interpretation, in ways that could sustain ambivalent relations *par excellence*.

> Aside: Here the captive captivates the captor; the pupil pupates the adult. (OHD: *captive* prisoner; *captivate* to fascinate, charm; Cassell: *capio* to take, to seize, to take in hand, to begin; *captio* ca heat, deception, fallacy, sophism; *pupus/pupa* a child, doll; OED: *pupate* to become a chrysalis.)

Communications and Information Technology (paragraphs 65-68)

We may surmise that this topic and the whole Inquiry are informed by a contemporary and singular, but not wholly unprecedented, phenomenon: the recent public emergence of the Internet, and the *happening* of the World Wide Web (WWW) in particular. The uncertainties over horizons that we encountered with the previous topic gather strength here. For instance, questions arise constantly over where the boundaries, if any, lie among national and thematic 'domains', 'intranets', corporate networks and the local usage of their associated tools, as in the 'multimedia' publication of the Inquiry's Report. A plethora of unruly issues is stirred up around *ownership, security, reliability, appropriateness*, and so forth. These provoke a defensive response in the Vision that construes its object of communications and information technology as a matter and opportunity for innovative management and control: '... quality and flexibility ... reduction in costs ... investment ... of time, thought and resources ...'. (paragraph 65) This opportunity is dramatised with vigorous, sometimes hyperbolic, language in this topic: '... exploitation ... imaginative leap ... bring about ... encourage ... overarching ... strategies... challenge ... harness ... new technologies ... the latest multi-media teaching materials' (paragraphs 66-67 and Recommendation 41).

These expressions are each linked to a duration of a few years (by 1999/2000, by 2000/01, by 2005/06). The sense of accomplishment is historically grounded in a *status quo* (paragraph 67) '... The UK already enjoys ... infrastructure ...'. It is projected into a satisfying part of the Vision: '... completed and maintained ... high quality materials and good management, to meet the

needs of students and others ...'. Inevitably, some expressions in 1997 were bound to fall victim to quaintness within ensuing years: '... open access to a Networked Desktop Computer ... own portable computer ... learning via a network ...'. (Recommendation 46 and paragraph 68) Yet the Vision taps into the bracing impetus (OHD: violent force, rapid motion) of the electronic technology to extend a cybernetic (OHD: controlling; *kubernetes* steersman [*sic*]) network throughout the activities of learning, teaching and the management of institutions.

The shock of that invasion (in Jacques Derrida's [1984a] text, in translation: that of *informatization*) disintegrates any grounds for dissent or precious specialism. Activities become *applications*, curricular content becomes *materials* to be accessed; those tools and the human participants all become *resources*. One could simply read the 'networking' structure—in view of the *strategic* framing—as one of surveillance, command and control. That would seem the antithesis of the Internet's origins in support of diverse research projects and of research into *survivable communications* in particular. Yet it would be hierarchically congruent with their military orientation. Two effects of the proposals relate closely to Derrida's reading of informatization: organicist language and integral calculability.

Thus, on the first point: 'Organicist language is always associated with "techno-industrial" language in "modern" discourse on the university.' [J. Derrida 1984a p.26] The move to secure an organic grip on institutions throughout the higher education *sector* (hence: *system*) seems to run counter to the thrust of collaborative enterprise and breaking down of barriers. Yet in C.S. Peirce's model, [as considered in S. Weber 1987 p.13] it might arise as a defensive retreat into habitual processes, recoiling from the diversely situated 'regional and local' demands of the previous topic. That rides in the face—but also reeling on the crest—of a hybrid, headlong onrush of electronic and managerial technologies. Within the onrush, the drive for 'entrepreneurship' underlines the oscillatory stance exemplified for the institution toward (or for/as/in/amidst) business culture.

On the second point, *integral calculability*, Derrida plays that notion off against *random consequences*. [J. Derrida 1984a pp.16-19] Drawing on Martin Heidegger's [1957] The Principle of Reason / Der Satz vom Grund, he makes information (as process) or informatization dependent on the principle of reason for integral calculability. Thus: 'Information ensures the insurance of calculation and the calculation of insurance.' and 'Information does not inform merely by delivering an information content, it gives form ... It installs man [*sic*, in translation] in a form that permits him to ensure his mastery on earth and beyond.' [J. Derrida 1984a p.18] We may then read the Vision's implicit response to *communications and information technology* as a summative-predictive, middle-voiced web (the Web enwebs (itself), involutes (itself)) of contributory, informational links across a *local-regional-world* spectrum. It also spreads itself across organic, calculable domains of a fully technologised *commercial-industrial-higher educational culture*. Ronald Barnett's *Supercomplexity* [2000] issues forth in bewildering guises; if the guises enact the substance, what is there left to disguise?

Staff in higher education (paragraphs 69-72)

> What better means exist than to 'gentle the losers' by persuading the academic community that teaching is as highly valued as research—so highly valued indeed that it deserves a dedicated standards-setting Institute to which new academics will be obliged to affiliate. [David Robertson 1998 p.10]

The previous topic put all elements of higher education on probation, as it were, precariously perched on a wave of exciting new potentials promised by electronically patterned technologies. This topic views 'all higher education staff, not just teaching staff' in an 'employment framework' with the institutions (as employers). (paragraph 72) The focus of concern is on 'permanent staff with teaching responsibilities' who are to be 'trained on accredited programmes' so as to 'achieve world class higher education teaching'. (paragraph 70) Whilst 'successful completion of probation' through 'associate membership of the Institute' (for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, ILTHE) is proposed as a condition only for 'new full-time academic staff', the aura of probation wafts across the higher education sector. (Part-time and impermanent staff appear to have nothing to prove, perhaps since they have nothing with which to bargain.)

The impulses we encountered in the previous topic—organicism and calculability—extend their reach through a 'review of the whole framework within which pay, conditions of service, work practices and the use of human resources can be settled' (paragraph 72) by an 'independent review committee' chaired by a Government appointee. (Recommendation 50) The Committee *committees* in its own image when it proposes terms of reference for such a review (paragraph 72), and enjoins institutions to review and publish their own policies and—surrogately, as quasi-enterprises—to 'seek the Investors in People award' (IIP).

If we run this topic and the previous one together with a lop-sided Beuysian gait, we can caricature the teaching staff as boring lecturers, gyrating narrowly in their orbits and in dire need of modern technologies through which to 'deliver' (set free) lively modes of learning. In the lecturers' inadequate though admittedly underpaid custody, students (while probing the probationers) are couched in muteness or infancy. They take part in the Action as mutely compliant ingesters, carriers and regurgitaters of knowledge. This they do despite or perhaps through a rhetoric of choice between innovative (mainly electronic) and traditional (mainly human) modes of teaching and support of learning. That exaggerated tableau gestures to a certain thoughtful ambivalence toward *professionalisation* and the *marketplace*, as voiced in Derrida's 'double question of the professions': [1984a p.23]

> First: does the university have as its essential mission that of producing professional competencies, which may sometimes be external to the university? Second: is the task of the university to ensure within itself—and under what conditions—the reproduction of professional competence by preparing professors for pedagogy and for research who have respect for a certain code? One may answer the second question in the affirmative without having done so for the first, and seek to keep professional forms and values internal to the university outside the market place while keeping the goal-orientation of social work outside of the university. The new responsibility of the "thought" of which we are speaking cannot fail to be accompanied at least by a movement of suspicion, even of rejection with respect to the professionalization of the university in these two senses, and especially in the first, which regulates university life according to the supply and demand of the marketplace and according to a purely technical ideal of competence.

Derrida is writing of *the university* in a sense more akin to those of (Samuel) Weber, Readings and Wortham than to that of the wider notion of *higher education* of the Dearing Inquiry's Vision. His concerns about 'producing professional competencies' including an academic profession with 'respect for a certain code' have to be answered across the higher educational context, insofar as the Vision portrays its 'sector' or 'system' as an organic whole. His remarks also bear on the conditions of Wortham's *radical ambivalences*. [S. M. Wortham, 1999] In Bill Readings's phrase, a *community of dissensus* might work out diverse economies of exchange with local, regional and world-wide partners that would

transcend the prevailing norms of bureaucratic surveillance (as embodied in the Research Assessment Exercise [S.M. Wortham 2000] and the various other frameworks of evaluation). Such communal action would be reprehensible in subverting the rules of commensuration, especially if it gained resources and funding but failed to accrue honour to the central distributors of public largesse. On the other hand, it could be seen as innovative and exemplary in extending and renewing the horizons of national (and regional) kudos.

Wortham's second and more tenuous ambiguity, that of a differentiation of processes of institution, seems quite in keeping with—and inherently *in the keeping of*—an apprenticeship model of academic tradition. This much is evident by its imparting a passionate interest in singular specialities of study not just as objects but as experiences that refresh the academy. Around this topic, the middle voice of ingenuity and surprise—when surprise surprises itself—thus inhabits both of Wortham's ambivalences and any such incommensurate dealings with the *market-placed* disciplines of excellence.

Management and governance of higher education institutions (paragraphs 73-76)

> Critically, the Inquiry has shied away from an alternative solution [i.e. alternative to that which Peter Scott calls 'the development of a compliance culture'] by failing to resolve the principle *[sic]* tension inherent in all public professionalised services today: by what balance of market action and government steerage are desirable outcomes realised? [David Robertson 1998 p.14]

The main thrust—or drift, at least—of this topic is to render governing bodies subservient to the national Funding Bodies in respect of satisfaction in 'all major aspects of the institution's performance ...'. That performance is to be published in a board's annual report as a condition of public funding. (Recommendation 57) This condition, and a slimming of membership of large governing bodies, are reminiscent of the rules for executive committees of charitable bodies or (if we discard any vestige of corporate democracy) a commercial board of directors. A 'continuing challenge to management ... to realise the full potential of [communications and information technology] systems' (paragraph 75) reinforces the impression of corporate control-seeking. This is as if the funding agencies were auditors or official receivers for a holding company, with a veto over annual funding.

The Vision compensates somewhat with notes of approval for efficient and diverse institutions, and nods toward 'principles' of respect for institutional autonomy, protection of academic freedom and 'open and responsive' governance. The framing of a cycle of review (at least once every five years) emphasises external accountability and effectiveness, as does the proposal for a 'code of practice on governance'. (paragraph 76) The theme of review is sustained through various edicts: '... with appropriate external assistance and benchmarks ...'; '... show good reason why ...'; '... discharging its obligations to the institution's external constituencies'; and '... including the participation strategy ...' (Recommendation 57).

The shift from an ethical voluntarism (to promote public wellbeing, however conceived) toward coercive accountability signals a diminution of trust. If we may transpose this phrase from electronic technology to governance, it promotes effort to 'realise the full potential' of a system; whether that be a board of governors or the higher educational sector as a whole. We might read the shift as yet another

stultifying measure to seize central control, then seek ambivalent ploys for subverting it. Yet that would be unfair, insofar as the Committee seeks to release dynamic potentials within, among and all around the institutions. We might equally question every tentative reading in this chapter so far. Then we would inhabit the zone of ambivalence that attends the relation of a policy document to its outcomes. Those cannot be compared with an original intention without passing at least twice through processes of interpretation, each multiplying the range of indeterminacy.

The pattern of institutions which provide higher education (paragraphs 77-81)

> The [Dearing] report gives the clear indication that the estate of higher education must be put in order. While a formal hierarchy could not be proposed, boundaries are marked out by the report - between research universities and the others, between universities and the colleges, and between higher education and further education. Drift across these boundaries is to be discouraged in a world where everyone shall know their place. [David Robertson 1998 p.19]

In the previous topic, the Vision appeared to struggle to apply an idealised model of business to the management and governance of higher educational institutions. Here it proceeds more confidently, since the categories it seeks to enforce already inhabit the 'system' in question. These are: the *university*, the *higher educational institution* (not designated as a university) and the institution of *further education*. Some complications arise insofar as names are somewhat misleading, according to particular criteria, where activities occur across boundaries (such as the incidence of *higher education* in institutions of *further education*). They also occur where overlapping activities should—in a categorical scheme—be handled through specialisation and collaborative links. Obstacles and adverse effects are cited in the case against such disarray: inexcusably low standards, poor quality of provision for students and unnecessary barriers (among institutions) to the desired extent of collaboration.

The Vision seeks to realise an orderly pattern to 'improve' effectiveness, efficiency and public confidence. That pattern would be guided by 'principles' of

> ... the need for diversity; institutional autonomy; responsiveness to national need; allowance for the development of individual institutions; the need for access across the country; and the need for proper economy and quality of provision. (paragraph 77)

The allocation of provision at sub-degree and degree levels, plus collaborative arrangements, would be encouraged by suitable control of funding through the Funding Bodies. (paragraph 79, Recommendations 67 & 68) In the drive for schematic order, the valuing of 'diversity' (so long as it has no adverse effects) is balanced against the urge to smooth out anomalies. Ambivalence attends that evaluation. On a precautionary basis, would we de-permit institutions with features or relations in common with a failing case?

Perhaps such a question arises from looking too closely at details. In practice the schematic norms could furnish standard explanations for shortfalls, and swiftly point to remedies. As in 'the case for establishment of additional universities' any matters arising could be expedited through 'a systematic decision-making process for deciding whether individual cases are reasonable.' (paragraph 80) That would avoid endless processes for dealing with dissenting voices and singular events, since individual situations could be systematically

matched against stored profiles of institutional types and their proper relations. Withdrawal of central funding would have a salutary effect on the rest of the higher educational sector. This would be an explicit and exemplary procedure for institutional, prejudicial action.

The funding requirement, Who should pay for higher education? *and* Funding learning and teaching (paragraphs 82-94)

> The report displays an ambiguity on every key matter except perhaps the technical aspects of the funding recommendations. [D. Robertson 1998 p.8]

These topics form a simple sequence of funding requirements, funding sources and the relation between them in respect of distribution. They present a confident case whose discontinuities become apparent if one reads them in reverse order. In a 'rolling three-year basis' of public funding, the Vision seeks to avoid the impacts on institutions of sudden changes to levels of funding. Likewise, in place of block funding, 'a greater proportion of public funding should follow informed student choice so that institutions have greater rewards for responding to that demand.' (paragraphs 93-94 and Recommendations 72-73) The Government should 'remain a major source of funding' in line with the Gross Domestic Product, to ensure internationally competitive levels of participation, a skilled workforce, social justice through access, and 'economic and cultural benefits [for] the whole nation.' Employers would 'contribut[e] to the cost of continuing education and training for their employees', whilst 'graduates in work should make a greater contribute to the costs of higher education in future.' (paragraphs 90-92 and Recommendation 71)

Those provisions seek to sustain a coherent pattern of funding in the long term. Yet even were the Government to redistribute the funds channelled by it to an extreme extent, it seems almost inevitable that its intervention would fail. The problem lies in excess flows from former graduates to repay their student loans, privilege their offspring and perhaps to endow their *alma mater*. (OHD: one's university or school; Cassell: nourishing mother or origin; Liddell: *meter* native land) These—plus tied payments from companies' training budgets—cannot be freely redistributed by Government. With both personal and corporate flows of funds increasing, they would offset the shift in distribution toward social justice, cultural benefits or even a broadly educated 'workforce [that] is equipped with the widest range of skills and attributes'. (paragraph 91)

The 'long and short term requirements' also display a huge lacuna, especially when juxtaposed with the long-term plans. Estimates are shown (paragraph 88, Table 2) for various expenditures 'in 20 years time', as raised in particular topics we have considered above: in respect of students, equipment, research, access funds and salaries. A 'demanding' cost saving is assumed to offset the impact of the largest item ('student numbers'). Yet there follows (in paragraph 89) a list of requirements that remain unquantified in the Vision: for publicly-funded research toward a 'knowledge-based' economy and 'to underpin higher level teaching', for an 'immediate pay review' and for 'increasing student support' beyond the Retail Prices Index.

Even if we let pass the implausibility of 20-year forecasting, it is apparent that *The funding requirement* provides no firm basis for the demands of *Who should pay for higher education?* and *Funding learning and teaching*. This is especially the case for the 'minimum' (paragraph 89) yet 'total' amount of 'an additional £350 million in 1998-9 and £565 million in 1999-2000' (paragraph 85). This is exacerbated by the increase in public spending with the growth in Gross

Domestic Product. (Recommendation 71) The lack even of indicative flows from graduates and employers may seem prudent in the Vision—and this is only a summary of the National Report—yet it can hardly justify the 'public confidence' that was portrayed as vital in the previous topic. The Vision's responses to funding requirements seem to involve a large measure of wishful thinking in the place of firm judgement, based on strategic modelling to anticipate social reactions. We are afforded no grounds for expecting a miraculous event to balance the conflicting interests represented in its incoherent economic model.

Briefly, we may observe by shocking analogy with Beuys's Action that conditions of well-meaning response to a situation can easily become absurd, far short of what is needed for a miraculous revival. The situation of the Vision is one of institutions trained by the funding agents to chase demand from students. In such conditions, the proposed mechanisms could become defunct if no longer 'carried' by public subsidies. Alternatively, the potential for economic (financial and cultural) performance in the higher education 'sector' may be such as to attract university-businesses. These might variously take the forms of enterprises—like the University of Buckingham and short-course industries elsewhere—plus commercially sub-contracted services and the arrival of subsidiaries of 'world class'—especially USA-based—institutions.

Student support and contributions, Enabling individuals to make their contributions *and* Government and higher education institutions (paragraphs 95-123)

These more technical topics on funding are not addressed here. From this point we address sections beyond the end of the more-or-less arbitrary sample text (the 'Vision') of the Committee's Summary Report [1997].

Higher education in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (paragraphs 124-7)

The Vision's grouping of higher educational phenomena in Scotland on the one hand and those of England, Wales and Northern Ireland on the other seems rather sweeping. (paragraph 124) However, its account does make nuanced remarks about 'distinctive needs and traditions' in each country (or 'region', if we count the devolved, perhaps newly subdivided, 'regional bodies' assumed in paragraph 141). In terms of social and personal experiences in higher education throughout the UK, it seems reasonable to suppose that one desperate plight has more in common with another than with a runaway success, regardless of geographical boundaries. Relative hardship and ease are not evenly bestowed on areas or populations, so there is a basis for analysis, though not necessarily on the basis the Vision adopts. The main features mentioned are those of students' migration (into residential accommodation in Wales and involuntarily out of the province of Northern Ireland); plus most distinctively, the high participation rate in Scottish higher education (linked with its greater funding per student [R.S. Robertson 1996]) and the breadth of its provision per student. The Inquiry not only 'inform[s]' its report 'more widely' from the Scottish experience, but deploys a Scottish Committee to come up with a separate report whose contents it takes into account in the National Report and thence in the Summary Report.

The Dearing Committee's Terms of Reference relate to the whole of the UK, as we noted at the outset and as the Summary Report reminds us here. (paragraph 124) The analysis by country feeds a synthesis into a Vision for the UK. This seems unremarkable until we focus on the assumptions of universal knowledge by the Committee (and its subcommittees) and of broadly similar interests and capabilities throughout the UK. To question those would be divisive; yet to ignore alternative views precludes choices, whether of academic or market orientations. The least we might care to concede to such divisive doubts is that distinct sensibilities might inflect cultural and personal choices in different localities. For instance, Celtic studies and courses conducted in Welsh or Gaelic speaking localities might yield distinct experiences as indigenous activities, differing from, say, experiences of Irish studies conducted in London. Would astrophysics or musical study be inflected, likewise or otherwise, depending on locality? These are not offered as empirical questions—for which there might well be evidence—but as a device to lever us away from the active-passive dichotomy of our habitual cause-and-effect mode of analysis, toward more varied and situated modes of thinking.

We may rather suppose Scottish higher education (or any other distinct tradition) to happen, as it were, in a spontaneous (self (re-)producing) *middle voice*, as a definite category or a predictable event. That proposition raises the questions of *institution* and *interpretation*, along the Pierce—(Samuel) Weber—Readings—Wortham avenue of critique. In practice, parts at least of the Dearing Report have been translated into other languages; yet that globalising broadcast is not what we are driving at. More relevant here is the thought that a policy proposal would eventuate differently, as would its terms of reference and especially the conditions giving rise to its remit. Perhaps more radically, an incommensurate and reflexive process of experimentation might happen in its stead. (Even the notion of a 'stead' seems presumptuous here, as if any alternative had to occupy the bounded place-and-time of the Dearing address.)

The Dearing Report as an organic entity is informed by a staunchly Unionist remit, outlook and findings. Its assumption and obliteration (*Aufhebung* of its own kind) of alternative voices simply fulfils that principled commitment. The Committee's process of consultation and reporting subsumed and deferred all Others into its Vision of the Same: diverse yet grouped together and commensurable.

Next Steps (paragraphs 128-42)

> So who wins, who loses? First, the [higher education] sector wins its cash, and it is protected, for the time being from private sector competitors. The élite universities win most, and need to change least. On the other hand, the post-1992 universities face an awkward future. They will not be able to improve their market position through imaginative management or farsighted strategic manoeuvre, and they may face competition from further education colleges in certain parts of their local markets. This in turn will force these institutions to lock in their markets and squeeze the colleges. As these kind *[sic]* of tactical responses unfold, prospects for an expansion of higher education in further education look anti-strategic and could be disruptive.
>
> Second, despite much of the rhetoric and sentiment in the report, under-represented groups in higher education do not win. ...
>
> Finally, ... the sector is in for a sustained period of command-and-control policy-making. ...

> The tension between steerage by government action or through the market will not lessen. ... [N]egotiated transactions between students and providers invariably lie at the heart of university systems and the introduction of private contributions intensifies this relationship. By tip-toeing away from the market option, the Dearing report merely postpones the solution. [Note 22 p.22 then refers to the importance of diversity and the market in Australian policy.] At the same time, it may have postponed the achievement of a higher education in the learning society as well. [D. Robertson 1998 p.20]

This final topic of the Summary opens with a couple of uplifting paragraphs. These are followed by busy schedules to allocate its recommendations to organisations, and to assign priorities to topics; plus an uplifting paragraph in conclusion. Here, we shall touch only on the uplifting messages. (paragraphs 128-9 & 142) The final paragraph is optimistic (about 'the value and importance of higher education', 'commit[ment] to wellbeing and [willingness] to embrace change' and 'good will, energy and professionalism'. Here, any critical or sceptical thoughts would seem ungracious, lest they make a performative statement of a failure of 'UK higher education' to 'match the best in the world over the next 20 years'.

The topic opens grandly:

> Our report sets out a major programme of change ... Our vision for the future is clear ... the legacy of our work ... a coherent package for the future of higher education ... The new compact requires commitment from all sides. (paragraph 128)

The next paragraph switches to a pragmatic tone to recognise 'the need not to overload organisations with too many tasks at once' and to set timescales for recommendations to be implemented (immediate, then within 3-5 years, and finally those deemed likely to take longer). A rupture manifests itself here between exuberant confidence (as above, in a pose of exemplary dynamism) and disarming candour about limited horizons ('... as new challenges and circumstances arise, including those which we cannot foresee from the perspective of 1997'). In that oscillation and in the earlier, gross discontinuities in the topics of funding, we glimpse an instability that is inherent to a 'vision for 20 years' (in the heading above paragraph 2) yet denied voice through most of the Summary Report. Joseph Beuys's tableau of *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare* [e.g. in U. Klophaus 1965] re-appears to bespeak of instructive futility and of transformative surprise, while the Dearing Inquiry's Vision rocks back and forth between the noisy 'levers of control' and muted 'eventual action'.

Keeping step with the Dearing Vision

Neither Joseph Beuys's Action nor the Dearing Inquiry's Vision offers us a blueprint for a model society. Yet both gesture toward potentials by provoking a *middle voice* speaking itself mimetically of its own accord through us in our diverse situations. This essay in chapter form has tried to keep pace with the Dearing Vision by tracing its faltering progress through topics and issues. The chapter accompanied the ungainly haul uphill, as it were, into and through the awkward passages of *Qualifications and standards* and *Supporting scholarship and research*. With those accomplished, it hobbled through the organisational (organic, cohesive) topics to reach some firm footing in urgent matters of funding. The regional topic and the long final stretch of *Next steps* swung round to surprise us with ambivalent perspectives on much that had gone before.

8 Re-membering: in the Place of the Address

As in the previous chapters, the text here does not set out to obliterate its workings in a seamless presentation of findings. A less explicit style of presentation might not dramatise the colourful connotations of language that infuse this sample text and—I surmise—other texts that seek to inform our institutional policy-making processes, at least in their more lyrical moments.

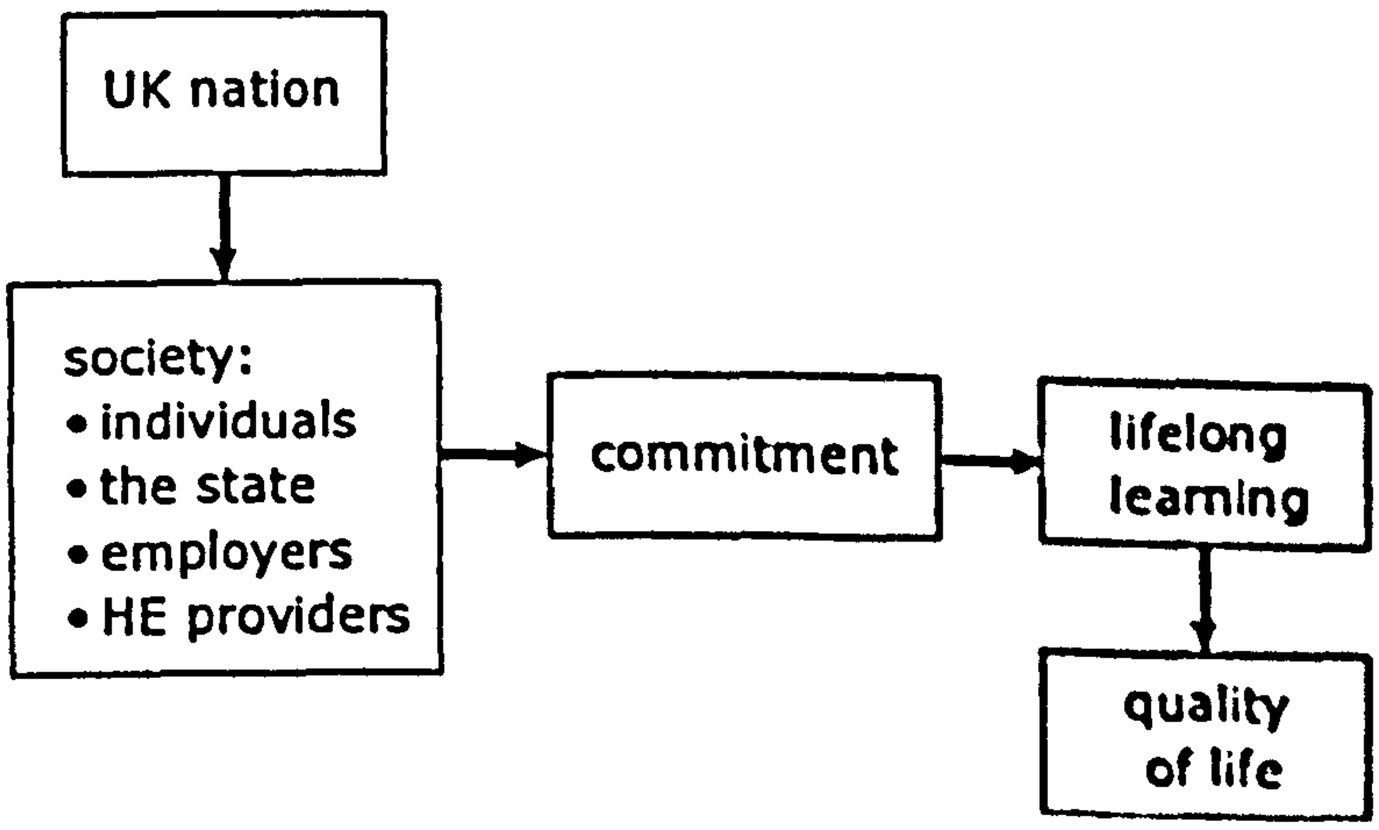
> Aside: As always in this dissertation, you are invited to consider whether its modes of working would be effective and useful in other contexts.

The ensuing section headings are based on those of the Summary Report [NCIHE 1997]. Some of the Report's parts are sub-divided for treatment here, so each heading identifies the paragraphs of the Summary Report to which it relates.

Recordances

A vision for 20 years: the learning society (paragraphs 2-8)

Figure 3 - The Vision of Dearing



A Vision is announced. It identifies national collectivities whose members have, or are desired to take, an interest in higher education. It calls on them to commit to ideals of lifelong learning toward improved quality of life in the UK.

The Vision directs our gaze to a point in time many ('20') years hence. Other views may well be available to us, but this Vision looks onto a particular social setting: *the learning society*. It conveys a scene of ceaseless activity, yet one that has attained favourable conditions for its members—to pursue their various, valued interests—and hence for that society as a whole. A *learned*

society, in historical comparison, might present a more static, passive and exclusive tableau. We can imagine a dignified group portrait of a learned society's founding members at their first meeting, now hung in a baroque, gilded frame in the present boardroom. The notion of *the learning society* involves intellectual ferment and widespread, material wellbeing; yet it retains some totalising traits of exclusivity—*the* ... *society*—and some almost forgotten inheritance of tradition, perhaps from traces of memories of adult education.

The crucial scene along the line of sight is that of an act of commitment. We, the *nation* of the United Kingdom, behold a prospect of an improved quality of life a few decades hence. We are called on to commit ourselves radically to the task of becoming a society of a particular kind. The required unity of purpose uplifts us and overcomes differences of interest among all parties: individuals, the State, employers and providers of higher education. It marks the end of politics and an entry into a contractual mode of living, beyond the need for constant renegotiation. The process that both transforms us and sustains our prospect of eventual wellbeing is *lifelong learning*. Whereas *the learning society* is a corporate notion—of an organism that learns from its environment—*lifelong learning* focuses on development at a personal level. Each of us, then, will be engaged in a continual pursuit of knowledge and-or skills rather than material advantage, with no end of striving in sight. The nature of that pursuit will be both intellectual and practical, and it will be competitive without being political in a partisan sense.

Our present standpoint is reassuring in the nominal unity, at least, of a kingdom ('the UK'). The situation resembles a village or a tribe of households related by the name of our mythical chief or totemic animal. In that domain, we may sense the long period (20 'years', seasons or way-stations) of preparation, perhaps to migrate to a land beyond our present horizon. Our destination seems so far off that we focus instead on the uncertain process of journeying, with its stages from those nearby and clear to the most distant and hazy.

We are distinct and autonomous agents—individuals and institutions—capable of reaching a hardly imaginable settlement. What then unites us? Apparently we have interests that converge on a particular kind of society. That society is limited by precise territorial boundaries (despite the time-based metaphor of travel, above). The founding covenant's pledge and its enforcement can occupy all of, and be contained within, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. That national structure provides an enduring framework for a 20-year Vision. Its legal systems underwrite its ongoing commitments (such, topically, as 25-year guarantees for private funding initiatives). The Vision entails shared concepts of *commitment*, *lifelong learning* and *quality of life*. Commitment, in particular, is deemed irreversible since it transforms institutions and individuals to the service of social ends. The individuals and institutions compete within that framework by striving to fulfil the Vision.

We may liken this Vision to notions of *full engagement* and *right livelihood* [A.T. Ariyaratne 1999 p.61]; but unlike those it retains a desire for more, or perhaps full, paid employment as the predominant mode of livelihood. Where Ariyaratne refers to a particular kind of community (a 'Shramadana Camp') as being 'like a "university of life" where no barriers exist, not even age barriers. ...', the distinct orientation of the Vision from this may only be a matter of emphasis and of the range of paths available. Thus though the Vision does not use these expressions, we would hardly expect it to reject the 'inculcation of values such as the dignity of physical labor, the spirit of cooperation, and self-sacrifice for the good of others ...'. [A.T. Ariyaratne 1999 p.6] A precondition of change in either case is a shared openness to change, while a precondition of united action may involve a static, grounding element of the communal Camp or shared vision.

In this Vision, there is a vigorous play between the static and dynamic aspects of institutions. Its hankering for vigorous reform favours movement and progress. Against that, the call for unity could impose a stultifying bond whereby a mass of individuals forms a wholly predictable institution. Once individuals and resources have been committed to its ends, there can be no turning back. To that extent, the Vision of individuals committing themselves to proceed through higher education resembles a marshalling of forces for advance, based on an oath of loyalty (not to abscond, betray comrades or turn against the command). However, this view of higher educational institutions as predictable may be overstated: even in the Vision, they are subject to economic eventualities. For instance if contractual living implies a culture of litigation, where will rights and responsibilities end? If students can sue a college for wasted time and effort, and even for consequential damages to their life prospects, might the college counter-claim for damage to its reputation through breach of a contract to study hard enough? These are mainly overheated imaginings, as yet.

The vertical and horizontal—hierarchical and contractual—dimensions of the Vision may bring to mind the immense collective effort of building ceremonial structures, perhaps in ancient Persia (as imagined by A.T. Ariyaratne). The ruler, artisans, traders and village folk pursue their diverse interests to construct an effective edifice. At the same time, many other institutions are sustained: the metropolitan nation and its empire, the imperial state, its army, industry and religions both high and low. Such a communal enterprise transcends ideological boundaries and political barriers. [A.T. Ariyaratne 1999 p.76] The diversity of its cultures proclaims and sustains a united society. [A.T. Ariyaratne 1999 pp.73-4] Rather than obliterate its enemies and re-build cities in its own image, such a regime can raise taxes and impose tolerant, benevolent rule. Only for disloyalty need it resort to enslavement. [S. Organ 2002] There we encounter implied limits as to what range of behaviour can be embraced by an inspirational Vision.

A particular and selective Vision implies some blindness to what else we might have in view but which we occlude by default. The phrase *the learning society* refers to a collective 'us'. It precludes solitary pursuit of knowledge in the image of the scientist as a lone heroic figure, but seeks to fulfil sociological, broadly middle-class attributes of education and respectability. In that frame of reference, 'we' embody a natural order of progress, albeit in a planned manner. When the Vision invokes 'the nature of programmes', it appears to favour a mode of shaping by instruction and influence rather than by force, except again as a last resort; higher education is strictly post-compulsory. In contrast to the masculine, Humboldtian ideal of the scientist wrestling with nature, we are invited to subscribe to a co-operative ideal aligned with a natural order, as outlined by McLintock Fulkerson [p.318, note 11 in Webster 2000:] '... naturalization is one of the functions of ideology. Beliefs are naturalized when they seem to reflect the very order of things ...'. By invoking a natural apparatus (non-human, or in keeping with a non-human order), we determine that the desired outcome is assured. The progressive programmes of the Vision instil a genetic investment in us all that becomes our first nature and quite invisible to ourselves.

The language of this section takes us through a somewhat jarring sequence of images in a Futuristic style of interplay between staying and going, akin to the static and dynamic aspects of institutions noted earlier. The mainstay of our wellbeing must remain in place to sustain forward movement. At the outset, higher education is presented in a state of unity. The text portrays—and in its own word, *reflects*—its Vision as a singular source of light. This serves as a symbol of power, clarity and outreach; it beckons us, as a beacon for our grounded journey through time. It illuminates a path, enabling us to see ahead and to *recognise* other parties. It represents a fusion of concepts—*learning* and *education*—to enrich social life and stimulate desire. That social dimension binds

individuals in a matrix of public and private institutions; the matrix comprises *levels* of attainment and *worlds* of interests no longer divided by *boundaries*. Higher Education is seen as a living animal, *gaining in strength* and engaged in a *pursuit*. That swift movement gathers and *drives* a multitude of individuals who have not made this journey before. In its inclusive momentum, the text briefly echoes a rocking rhythm of travel: *young and mature, full-time and part-time*.

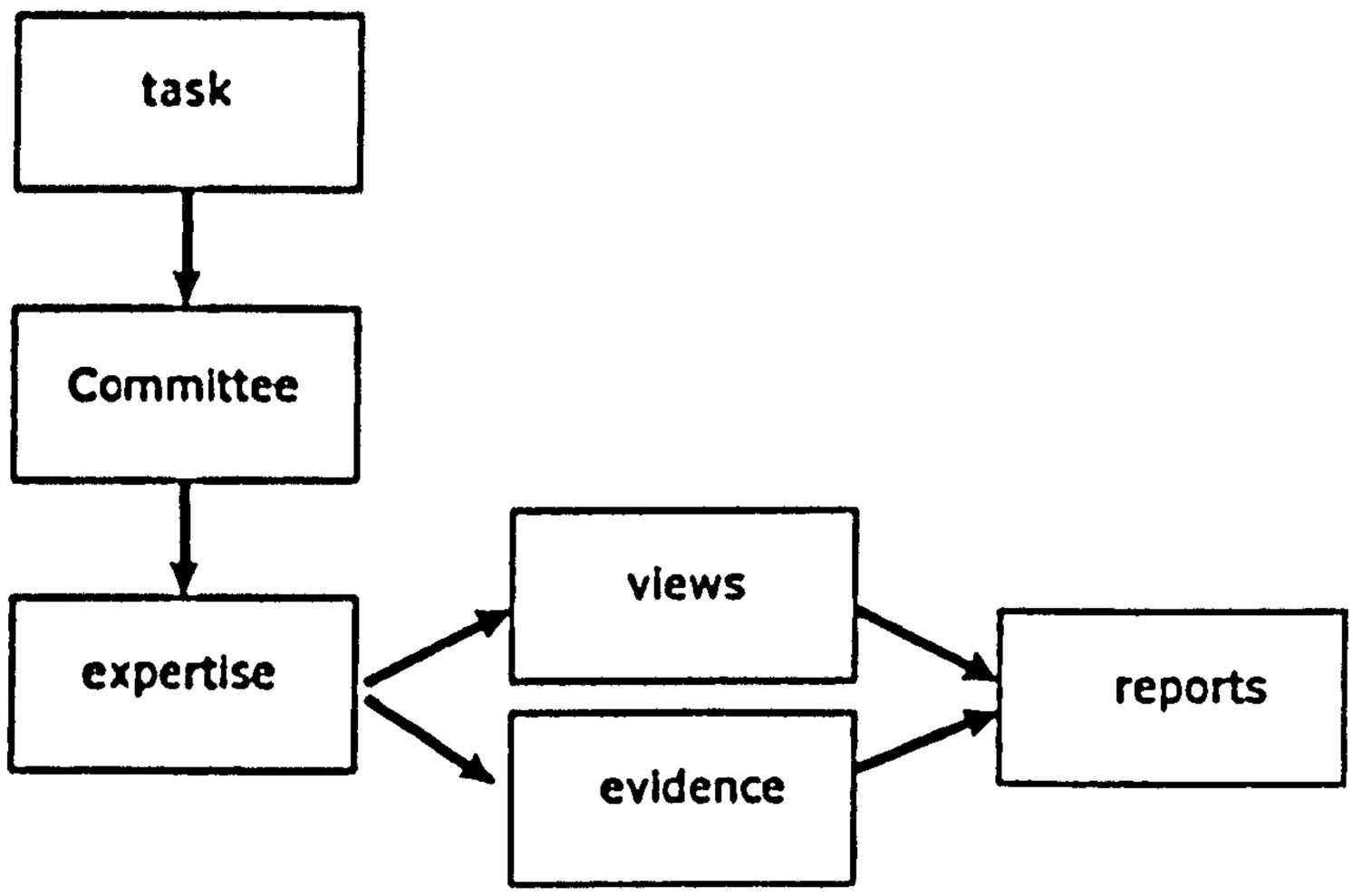
But—to make that rhythm falter—there is anxiety as to whether the fleet-legged animal can surmount crucial obstacles—*challenges*—along its destined way. That sobering thought invokes a levying of demands on higher education, as conditions of attaining the Vision. The images then become colossal: *beyond their expectations, the best in the world, standing throughout the world, leading edge of world practice* and *seek continuously to improve its own performance*. The rewards are brought back in a heroic manner—*available to the nation, sustain a culture* and *society as a whole*—so that everyone in the UK can partake in the feasting (OHD: joyous occasion). Toward that joyful end, the unity becomes a team of two bodies, distinct yet harnessed as one: appropriate staff and excellent institutions are yoked and sent forth together (*committed*).

There is an immediate, imaginary development from that binary image: a herd or *community* of *free-standing institutions*. The heroic flourishes such as *world renown* give way to an interplay of creative movement (*pursuit of excellence* and *creation of a learning society*) with a secondary, static role of *supporting*. We can glimpse the participants. The active members (the researchers) exercise vision; on reflection, they even *see themselves*, while the *others* (the teachers) are passively *engaged*. Abruptly, the community is re-invoked, transformed and portrayed as a composite entity in the health-giving base of society: *higher education is fundamental*, a *basis*. In that role, it returns to serving universal ends: *the world's store, care, wellbeing* and a *civilised society*. If we can keep up with the jump-cuts between scenes, all will be well in the end.

Inspired by this uplifting and healing thought, we now turn to a mundane matter: the formation of the Committee's œuvre.

The Committee's approach to its work (paragraphs 10-11)

Figure 4 - The approach of the Committee



The Committee's task was fixed in its Terms of Reference. [NCIHE 1997 pp.5-6] The main Committee then called on experts' views and evidence for composing the reports to fulfil it.

More precisely, the Vision explains that the Committee persuaded non-members to take part, then proceeded to 'hear' views and 'gather' evidence. This synæsthetic crossing (transposition of the senses: hearing and seeing, also material and visual) gives an impression of thoroughness. Like a ship's manifest, it claims to be as complete 'as possible'. The outcomes announce themselves as emerging from due process unaffected by whims of will or natural vagaries. The reports respond wholly and accurately to the task that was set. They represent the collective testimonies of expert witnesses, who in turn take account of diverse opinions and findings. The 'external members' are insider-outsiders, partaking with the Committee yet among us, the onlookers, in spirit. They can see beyond the original members' horizons, and see the same things differently.

The Committee's findings, then, are not somehow inherent, predestined or predetermined, but emerge from the interactions of its appointed and co-opted members in working groups. They manage the 'scale of the task' as the ratio of reduction or enlargement (OHD: *scale*) with precision, from reality to report. The Vision conveys to us a mechanical—specifically optical—model that mediates and composes a kaleidoscope of views into a coherent whole. We will return to that image toward the end of this chapter.

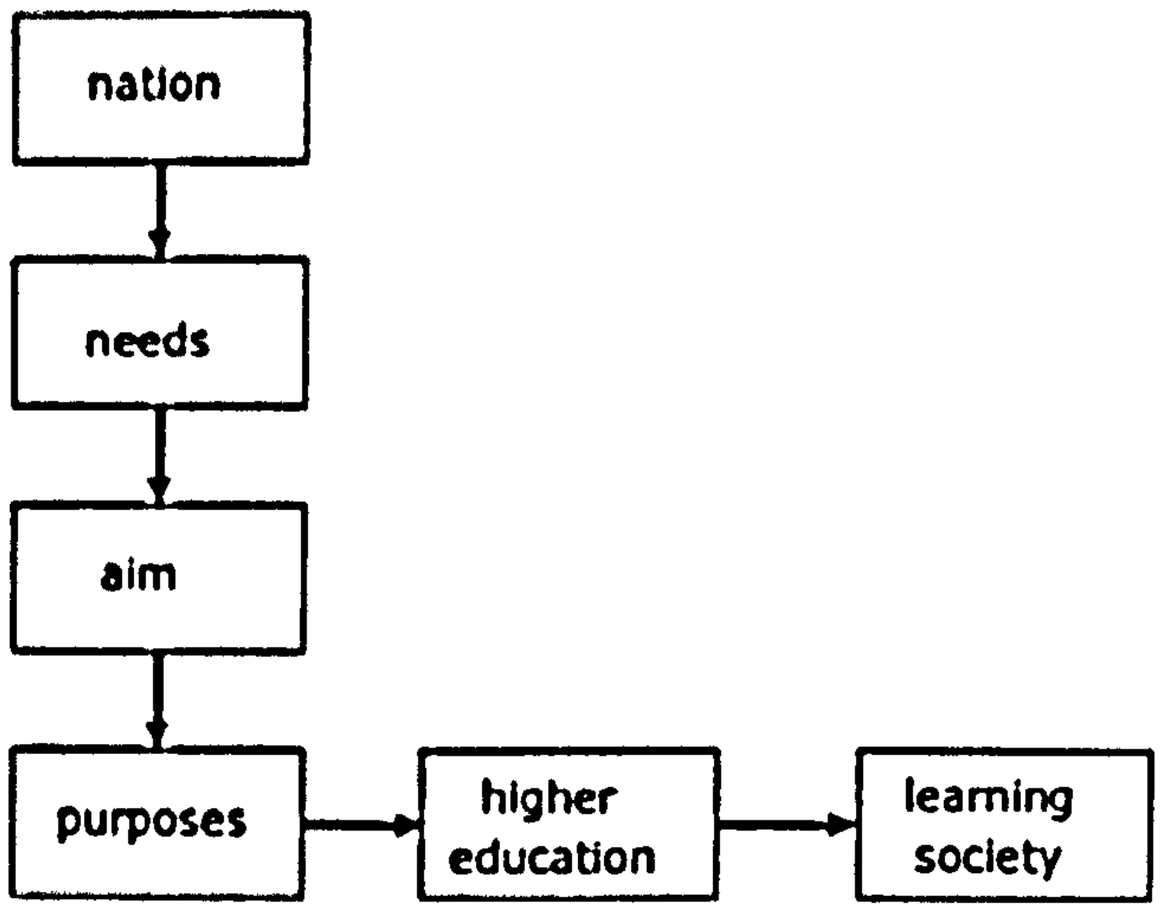
The language describing the Committee's approach to its work is also given a human aspect. The external members are persuaded to join; the Committee causes them to have a belief (OHD: *persuade*) that induces them to join the work to fulfil the Terms of Reference. Other individuals and institutions 'within and outside higher education' gave 'tremendous support and commitment' to the Committee. They overpowered (OHD: *tremendous*) the Committee, perhaps to keep it from failing, sinking or going astray; they endured and tolerated the task (OHD: *support*).

Our sense of wonder (from the previous section) at higher education's universal ends is transferred to the Committee's first prospect of its task. In a dramatic shift of perspective, we stand on the approach road and contemplate the steps or ladders (*scale,* Cassell: *scalae*) by which we must invade the stronghold before us. With levied—and indeed *persuaded*—members, plus intelligence and speculative ideas, we hope to overwhelm it swiftly. That coup will allow time for our exploit to be recounted at length to our sponsors. We must settle the debts we have incurred to our collaborators, *within and outside* the compound.

We will next occupy a high vantage point from which to survey shortfalls and decide on means of overcoming them.

Aims and purposes (paragraph 23)

Figure 5 - Aims and Purposes



Here the Vision refers to a set of national needs and presents higher education as integral to a process for accommodating them. The process is one of learning conducted by society as a whole, not just by individuals or institutions.

The Vision characterises the agent of this transformation as 'the learning society'. The needs cannot be met in a finite sense, since higher education aims to 'sustain' the learning society indefinitely. Of the 'aims and purposes', only one aim and four main purposes are stated. The aims and purposes are not open-ended, but are a selected few from the many that the Committee indicates that it has identified in its reports. We are presented with the narrow vista of an aim illuminated by ('in the light of') national needs and by purposes to put that aim into effect as if by directing a beam or avenue of light onto it. This bright path widens onwards as the learning society engages in a quest without end. In the Committee's Vision, the nation's needs are for more and for better, as it weaves together individual, intellectual, economic and social ends along the way. We may contrast this long-term aim with short-term political exercises.

> Aside: At the time of writing, a recent example of expediency is evident in the celebrated Millennium Dome in London, seen as a political gesture devoid of lasting purpose. It constitutes a momentary event to impress the natives. The happening occurs in an abyss of aimlessness, in the form of a great pierced wen gazing blindly skywards. That gigantic wheel upriver, the many-pupilled London Eye, (re)presents a longer-term, business-like vision. It affords an experience—a simulated mode of flight—to visitor and resident alike.

The 'learning society' aims to promote a diffuse prosperity and general wellbeing among people across all walks of life and in all regions of the UK. As a construct, it resembles measures of utilitarian contentment or gross national product within a statistically 'democratic, civilised, inclusive society'. It stands apart from the kind of atomistic reckoning that dwells on individual degrees awarded, academic careers and enthusiasts' pursuits (as traditionally found in, for example, adult education). 'The learning society' of the Summary Report's title appears inspirational and sounds vaguely practical. The joint 'sake' of 'knowledge and understanding' (in 'knowledge and understanding for their own sake') also

sounds more inspirational than practical, in that it points to an absolute value rather than social usefulness. Benefits to society, then, can emerge from ideal, inhuman or impersonal pursuits; but those pursuits must not lose touch with practicality.

When individuals 'develop their capabilities', this conjures up movement to realise human potential. The drift of thinking here seems akin to the notion of *sarvodaya* (the awakening of all). [A.T. Ariyaratne 1999 p.6] In any scheme for a community, we may encounter contradictions in the scope of who may benefit; the members may favour their own kind at the expense of outsiders. For instance, social inclusion in UK higher education is based on drawing out personal potentials. That presents a stark contrast with the situation of overseas students some of whom—or whose governments or families—can well afford to pay for their attendance when others cannot do so, irrespective of merit. Equally, though not mentioned here, there is the anomaly of UK students paying privately for places in other countries, or in private colleges, thus to an extent bypassing UK schemes of scholarship based on merit. The inspirational gloss of the Vision may distract us from some quite practical limits or implicit agendas, and the stated ideals may well deliver quite pragmatic, selective and individual advantages and privileges.

The language used here is much concerned with behaviour driven by ideals. The opening sentence 'In the light ... we believe ...' encodes a vital bonding of rationality with truth; that is to say, an intellectual loyalty (OED: *believe*). That loyalty will enable us to defer and endure (Cassell: *sustain*) that which we are compelled (OED: *need*) to bring about. Our gaze is directed away from the vista of regulated behaviour and toward the life of the spirit. People are seen to act under divine influence (OHD: *inspire*) rather than as constrained or debilitated by policing.

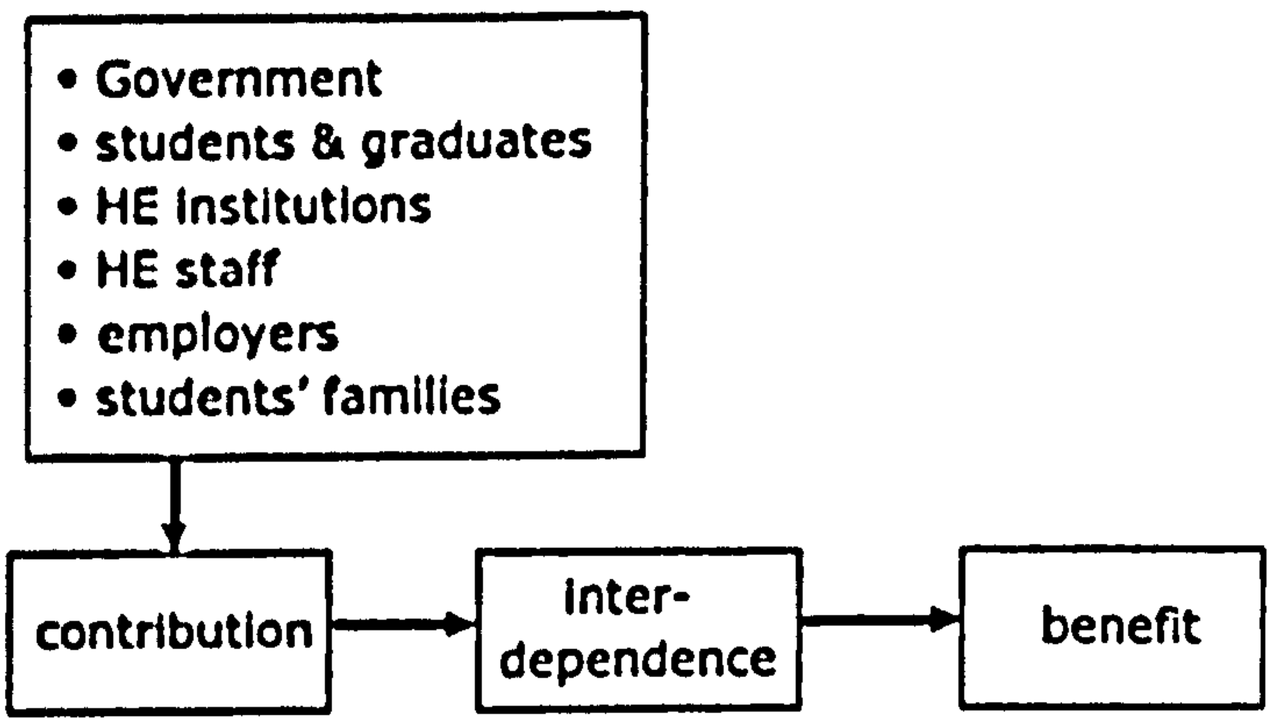
> Aside: cf. OED *inspire*, quoting '1876 Birch *Rede Lect. Egypt* 40': 'Internal administration and microscopic regulations had policed away the spirit of the people.'

It would be better, then, if we were moved from within rather than forced from outside ourselves.

This ideal of acting out of inspiration gives way abruptly to a scene of contractual relations in the marketplace.

Higher education: a new compact (Table 1 & paragraph 9)

Figure 6 - A new compact



In this section, the Vision (using an embedded table of text) weaves a network of dependencies in which each party benefits from the other parties' contributions. Based on that economy of exchange, it portrays a binding covenant among the diverse parties that are involved directly or indirectly in higher education.

We may observe that such dependencies already exist, but that the burdens and benefits fall unevenly upon the participants. The Vision offers a new deal: a fairer distribution of the burdens among the prime beneficiaries. In this positive, progressive reckoning, the Vision emphasises eventual, redistributive gain rather than imminent removal or future withholding of unjust advantage.

Higher education is portrayed as a service to its consumers, who are 'represented' by the Government (Table 1) on the part of the State (paragraph 9). In place of an exchange economy among peers, we have a regulated market. This mediated, market-based model stands in implicit contrast to a model of higher education in general (and the university in particular) helping to determine, and acting for, the long term interests of society. The market is to be regulated by contract and driven by self-interests based on expectations of material gain. The particular interests include those of an odd, overlapping duality of 'society and taxpayers' demanding services paid for by public funding. Dependency among parties is vital to the co-operative basis of that market. There is no place for participants of one kind—such as universities or academic staff—to covenant or band together to pursue partisan ends and thus extract concessions from society and taxpayers at large.

The model of a marketplace has some odd connotations. The ideal of open or free trade, in which each party purchases what it can, precludes equitable sharing. [A.T. Ariyaratne 1999 p.62] Thus when families and companies severally pursue their own ends (economic, occupational and domestic), no surplus or redistribution occurs to sustain students from poorer backgrounds and-or who are unemployed. When the families of students are expected to make a '[p]ossible contribution to costs' (in an ageing student population), we may easily misread this as overthrowing tradition by calling for mature students to be maintained from the earnings of their less populous offspring.

In a more plausible vein, the notion of a civil, social contract opposes the feudal traditions of university charter and of tenure in academic posts. It implies other problems arising from the timescale of commitment. Despite the Vision's air

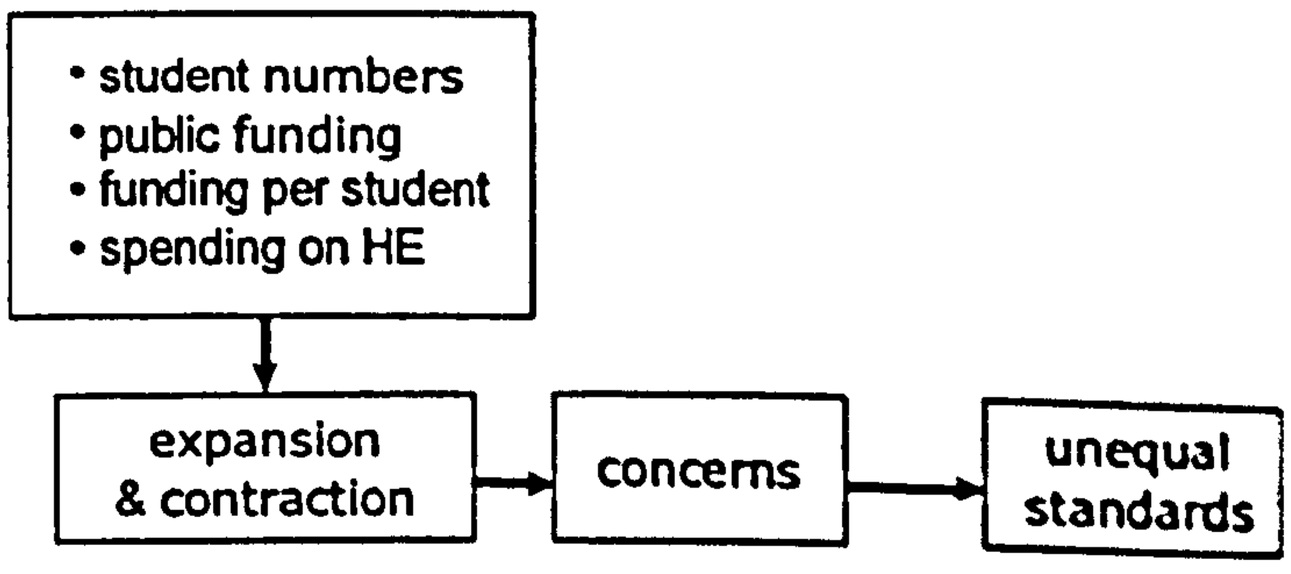
of contractual permanence, in practice the duration of agreement or understanding varies. For instance, commercial companies cannot readily commit themselves for 20 years ahead, families' compositions and interests evolve across decades, and governments change; so only short- to medium-term co-operation is practicable for those parties. The several kinds of interest invoked here may not dovetail as required.

The section's use of language bespeaks of a complex entity ('we') with a shared destiny. A key notion of *interdependence* is swiftly converted to a *bond*. That is a reassuring move, since it spreads a burden and increases security. All parties to the *compact* are treated as being essential, yet the phrase *interdependence between* suggests a singular party ('the state') from whom the collectivity of other parties is suspended. (Cassell: *dependeo* to hang down from) That is to say: the rest of the parties are multiple and diverse, but there can only be one State (of the UK) on which we depend. The calls for clarity suggest a source of light to illuminate the—possibly scandalous—scene (Cassell: *clarus* brilliant, illustrious, notorious). That light will help us to certify what we see anew (Cassell: *recognosco* to know again, authenticate), so as to take a firm hold on things. (OHD: *enterprise*, a bold undertaking; from *prehendo* to grasp) Such a firm bond has a character of purity and *devotion*, as in the ideal of a civil servant's oath of loyalty to the State. Together we must exercise *rigour* (OHD: extremity, distress; austerity and exactitude) that may have harsh effects such as numbness. (Cassell: *rigor*) Yet if we adapt policy to circumstances (OHD: *opportunity*), a favourable wind may transport us toward a safe haven. (Cassell: *opportunus, ob + por-*; cf. Kairostami [2001] *The Wind Will Carry Us*) There will then be no need to look back to any former impasse (*aporia*).

The next section looks back to previous times of restraint.

Higher education today (paragraphs 12-15)

Figure 7 - What came to pass



Here the Summary Report expresses a coherent history of economic trends in higher education across three decades. That history endorses concerns about under-investment and inadequate quality of teaching, to mount a case for a new economic dispensation. It acknowledges the sustained efforts of staff in higher education, even as it offers them a prospect of 'substantial redundancies'.

The tone of the text, though, is insistently positive. Through it we find ourselves in momentous times, among ground swells of change, perhaps from some distant storm. Yet there is something reassuring here: the text's calm manner distances us, so to speak, from the tempests or earthquakes that would threaten to engulf us (OHD: *ground swell*). The information on trends imparts

confidence for predicting what we should expect; inclusively, we are invited to share and trust the Vision. The text argues that—rather than vary according to needs or demand—the higher education sector should increase in size or at least in terms of the proportion of young people who gain first degrees.

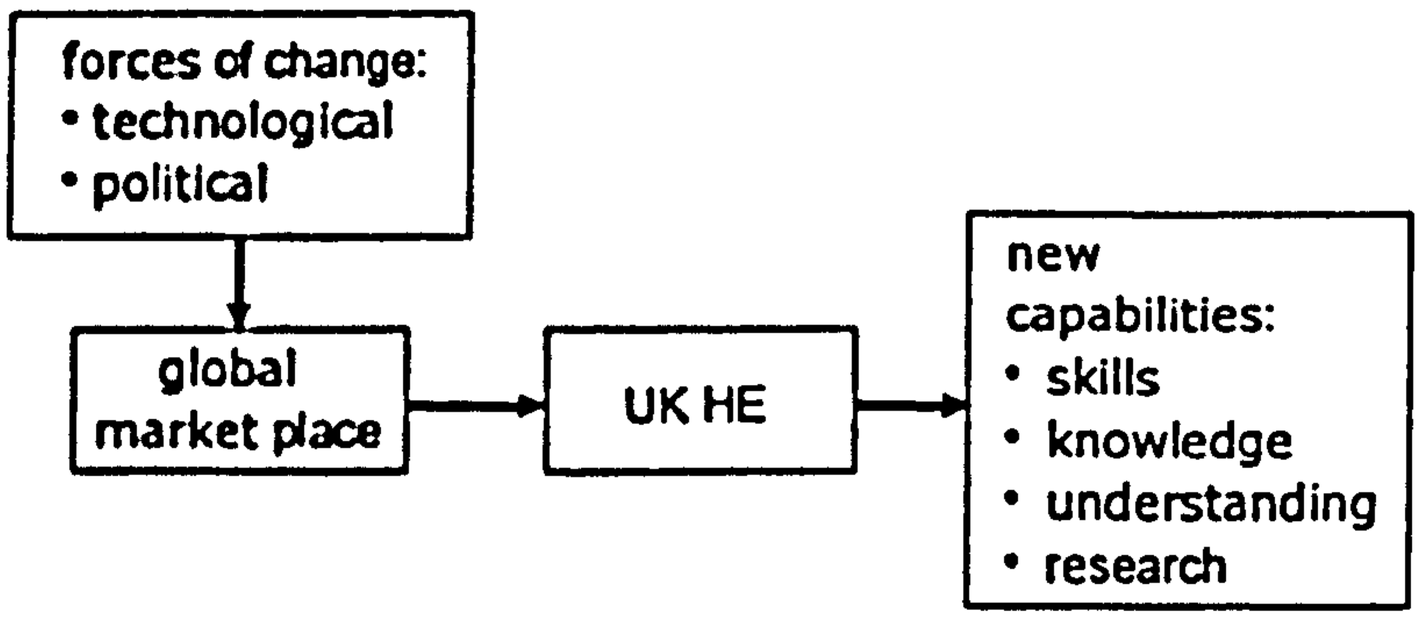
The Vision is resolutely forward-looking even as the Summary Report depicts trends from the past. Its potted history—of 'a very rapid rise in the number of students ...'—elides the entire polytechnic movement and its absorption, through transformation and eventual re-titling, into a much enlarged university sector in the early 1990s. Implicitly, though, the Vision allows for the view that since the 1970s we have abandoned a universal 'gold standard' of funding per student and of educational experience in the universities. It thus resonates with songs of both praise and lamentation.

The section opens with a eulogy to workers in higher education, then promptly catalogues concerns and reductions. The language of these involves themes of assurance, urgency, handling and diminution. Assurance is based on *standing*, associated with pride (OHD: *do proud* to treat with honour), maturity (Cassell: *maturus* ripe), *substance* (Cassell: *substo* to stand firm) and *prospect* (Cassell: *prospecto* to situate towards). Urgency runs through *maturity* (Cassell: *maturus* speedy), *rapid* and *quick*. Handling requires *feeling* and *sifting* (Cassell: *concern* from *cerno* to separate or sift) and measuring of strength (Cassell: *experior*). Diminution involves forcing back to obedience (OHD: *reduce* to bring back by force or necessity), rescuing (Cassell: *reduco*—also—to rescue), defeat (Cassell: *damnum*) and extravagant devouring (*rapid*, Liddell: *dapto*). The songs of praise and lamentation, then, balance our prospects of redemption against the penalties for persistent obstinacy.

The next section dramatically presents the path of redemption.

The wider context (paragraphs 16-22)

Figure 8 - Context



This account presents higher education in the UK as being beset by increasing pressures to adapt that also afford urgent opportunities. On that basis and subject to strict conditions, it makes a case for UK higher education to receive increased national investment.

In a drama of inexorable forces, the UK is cast in the role of a merchant who is hard-pressed by competitive adversaries. The higher education sector plays both the part of a commercial venture and that of a supplier of novelties on demand; those roles being vital to mercantile (national) survival. The plot is a race in which the UK keeps up with a global vanguard from which it 'cannot afford

to be left behind'. The political ideology that motivates the drama is that of free market capitalism as an exclusive, radical and fundamentalist system of belief. Commercially, the UK seeks to share in a global élite's monopoly of new technologies to enhance its products and services. [cf. A.T. Ariyaratne 1999 p.59 on *globalisation*] Higher education is enjoined to develop that expertise. Metaphysically, the global forces of competition are made to appear natural, as if they were the inevitable consequence of 'economic laws that are as free of "metaphysics" or "values" as the law of gravitation'. [A.T. Ariyaratne 1999 p.9 citing E. F. Schumacher *Small is Beautiful* ... 1993/1973 p.38] Culturally, modern growth is implicitly contrasted with traditional stagnation. [E.F. Schumacher 1993 p.46] Naturally, our former moribund ways will be left behind as we embark on our venture.

The Vision's language proclaims a fresh start (*early, new, open up, premium*) in a whole new world that unfolds around us.

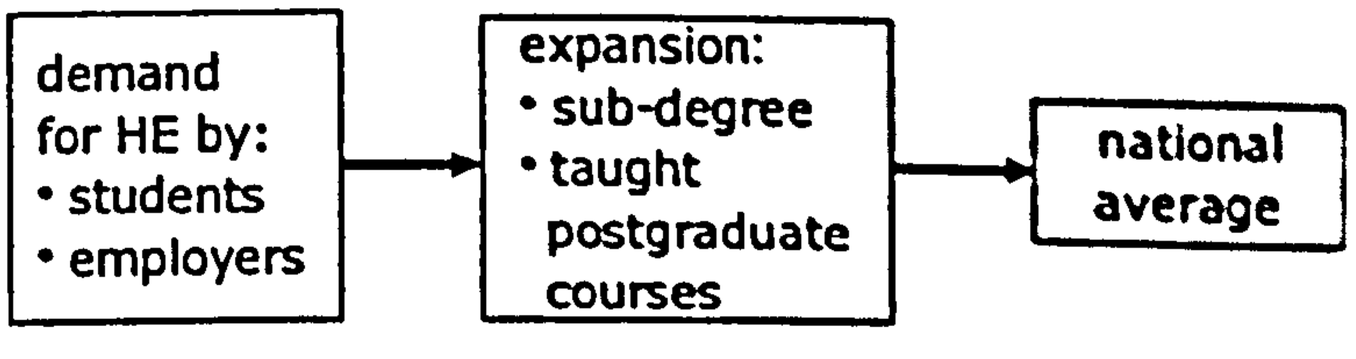
> Aside—Cassell: *praemium*, from *prae* = before and *emo* = buy; that which is taken first; advantage, gain, profit; (especially) an honourable reward; (ironically) punishment; (especially in war) booty; (also: in the chase).

That world is constituted by means of the sign [C. Howells 1999 pp.76-7 in a précis of J Derrida's *Écriture et la Différence* p.190] of a globe (Cassell: *globus* a heap, mass or crowd). The spatial pointers dart to and fro (*external, driving, remote, anywhere, transmit, level, deliver, make for* and *left behind*), as if we were buffeted by angry seas, yet the main thrust is onward and upward (*increase, greater* and *ever more*). The rhetoric is propelled by cadences on a swelling, epic scale: *increasing ... in turn; stored and transmitted; [w]e judge ... even more, complex and fast-changing;* and *[o]ther countries ... other ... systems.* Yet the most precious qualities are those of prudence and subtlety: the thrift and stewardship of economy (Liddell: *oikonomia*) and instructive cunning (Cassell: *techna* a cunning trick, artifice; *technicus* a teacher of any art); faced with *challenge* from a threat of calumny (Cassell: *calumnia* a trick or other artifice). Despite the stormy passage, then, the virtue of taking care will steady our course and preserve us from harm.

We are about to be encouraged with a prospect of economic rewards from this venture.

Future demand for higher education (paragraphs 24-28)

Figure 9 - Demand



The call here is to enlarge higher education, especially outside of first-degree courses, in response to anticipated demands for its services.

The section continues the economic theme of competition among 'advanced' or 'developed' nations as distinct from 'developing' nations. However in this scene the advanced economic units are not supposed to compete but to co-operate through a 'shared commitment' that values individuals who possess the latest of technological knowledge and skills. The Vision's testimony of there being such a demand relates to 'people of all ages' and to 'young people' in particular. However the most compelling, comparative statistics relate to young people's participation rates in higher education systems. In sociological terms, that participation carries eugenic undertones for the aspiring (and now dominant) middle classes, for whom the university becomes a site of matchmaking and reproduction of economic advantage. In the phrase '... student and employer demand ...', the NCIHE's market model links industry and those currently studying as providing reliable indicators of future growth.

We might object that this ignores massive demographic changes. The ambivalent phrase 'learning for life' plays on notions both of a life yet to be lived and of learning throughout one's life—a fact that is only verifiable in retrospect. As the UK moves away from fixed ages for retirement and toward indefinite and perhaps intermittent participation in paid work, these meanings take on an urgency beyond that which the Committee may have had in mind. This is evident in '... manage their own development and learning throughout life ...' (para.19), and for senior staff nearing retirement age (para.71). The drift is away from the assurance of a demand-driven model to a complex structure of local or partisan needs amid faltering conditions of supply. The call for co-operation may serve not only to fend off external competition but to avoid national schisms in a time of uncertainty.

The section's use of language binds *people* and *nation* within firm constraints. It links politics and place, as in David Robertson's definition of nationalism:

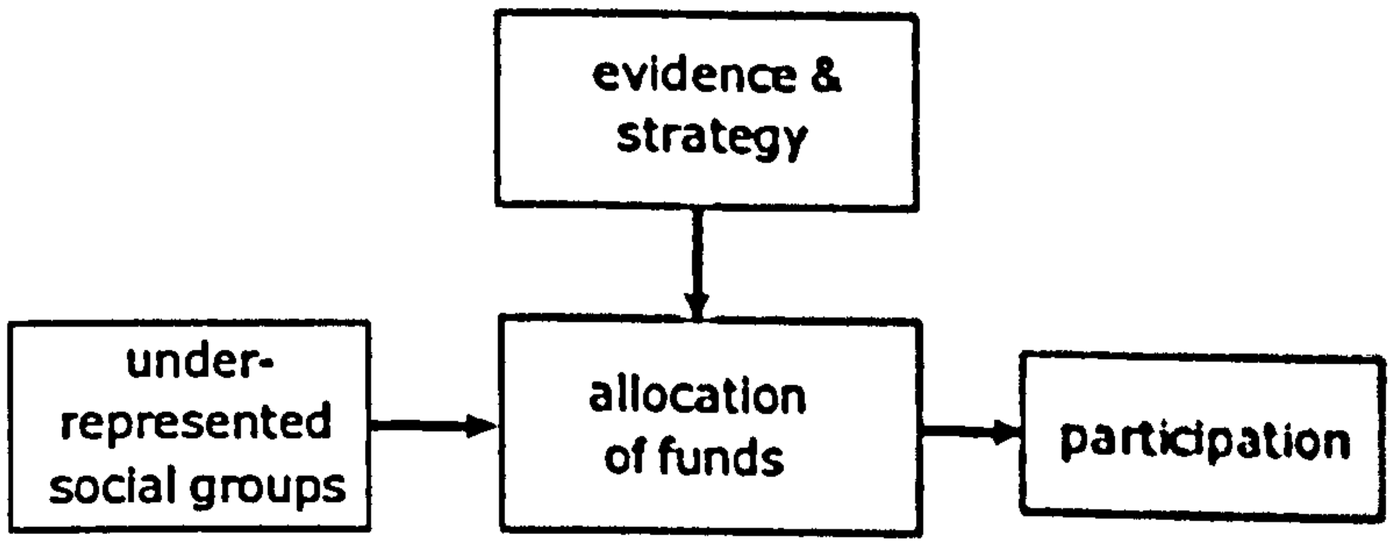
> ... the political belief that some group of people represents a natural community ... often a symbolic tool used by political leaders to control their citizens. ... by stressing national unity and focusing on [external] threats ... to disguise or to execute otherwise unpopular policies. [D. Robertson 1993]

The people are represented by desires (*demand, expect* and *ambitious*) for more (*grow, increase* and *develop*). These appetites could be variously fulfilled or curbed through military action (*strategic, aim, target, equip, advance* and *compete*). Yet there are indications of stasis (*place, basis, edge, lie* and *bear*) as well as of movement (*move on, fall* and *lift*). The desires are thus bounded in space and time (*term, cap, conclude* and *end*), even as they are required to mount a demonstrative display (*signify, figure* and *show*). This play of fixity and gestural movement suggests a platform for issuing a moving call in the hope of evoking a response.

Next, the Vision will confront prospects of national dissolution with demonstrations of wellbeing.

Widening participation in higher education (paragraphs 29-30)

Figure 10 - Participation



The Vision urgently seeks measures to spread the opportunities and benefits of higher education more evenly across the population of the UK.

Here we attend to a call for social justice. We cannot help hearing the text's plea to tackle the disadvantages faced by people (counted in social aggregates, while lacking individual voices) who rarely take part in higher education, perhaps since they cannot or do not expect to do so. Government allocation of funds is used to provide incentives for institutions to adjust their intakes by expanding their services in a socially redistributive manner.

'Redistribute' may be a misnomer; it is too bold a term for what seems more like an awkward shuffle around the sensitivities of mainstream electorates. The measures proposed are not primarily redistributive, since sociologically speaking they do not propose to take educational places away from the dominant middle class nor to block its uptake of higher educational provision. Instead, they seek to fudge the issue by expanding that provision and rewarding the admission of students from disadvantaged backgrounds in the marginal space that funding is deployed to open up. There is a further evasion here: by focusing expansion (paragraph 28) on institutions outside of degree-level teaching and postgraduate research, the Committee's text defers any confrontation with the longer established universities. A 'robust strategy' for widening participation would have to include affirmative action to discriminate against members and offspring of privileged demographic groups.

However—apart from its political expediency—the tone used here also seems to be driven by an empathic awareness, particularly that of compassion. We may liken this emotion to those experienced in feelings of *mudita* and *karuna* [G. Claxton 1990 pp.178-9].

> Aside: Guy Claxton explains *mudita* as 'the result of spontaneous identification with someone else's happiness ... the converse of envy' and *karuna* as the 'quality of compassion that arises with meditation; feeling another's sorrow or consternation as if it were one's own.'

The latter feeling is the more evident here, as in the Vision's call for wider social participation in higher education, also in its compassion for the staff's decades-long fall in public status, for students' financial hardships and for the higher educational institutions' enforced reductions in spending per student. The Vision thus contemplates (as it were) a wide canvas showing deep perspectives, and engages in the kind of suffering in which people are oppressed by worldly

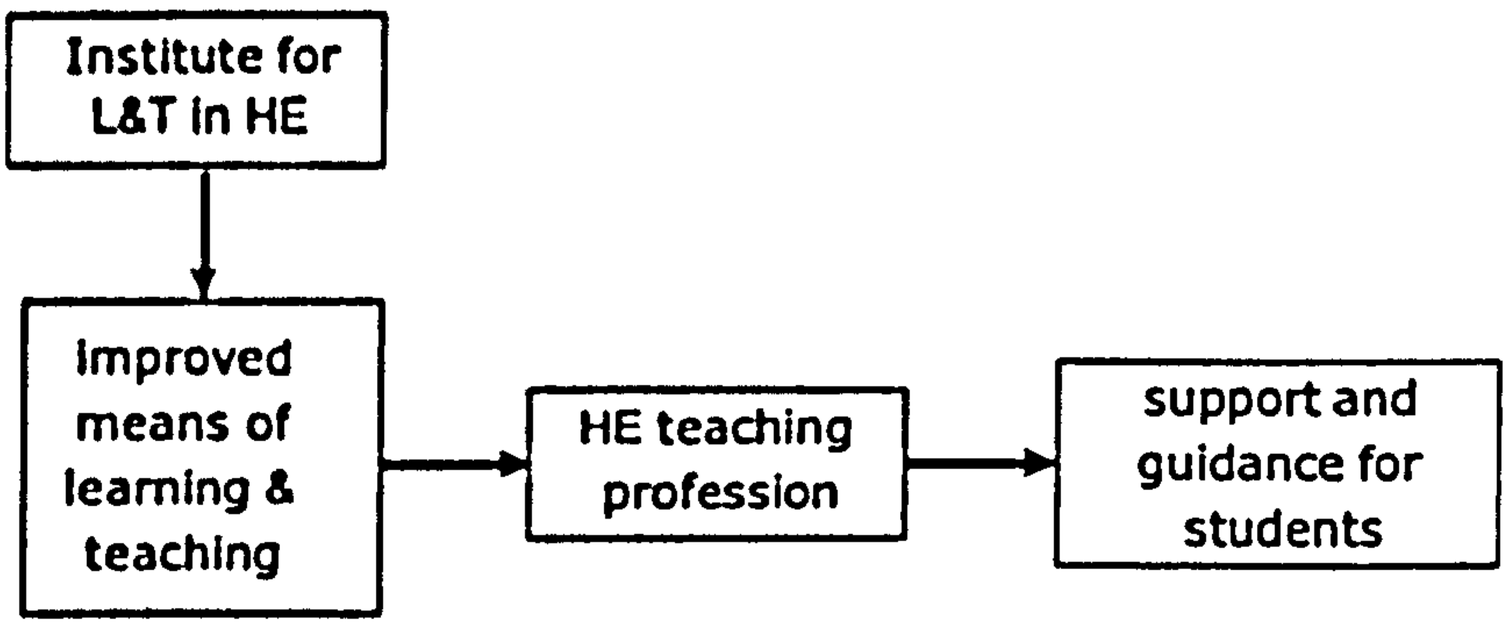
constraints. These constraints reflect the Committee's own frustrations, perhaps, as well as those of the social objects of its genuine concern.

The section's language combines notions of space (*situation*, *lie*, *wide*, etc.) and of time (*past*, *recent* and *future*). Groups of people linger apart (*there*, *remain* and *outside*) but will be included and catered for (*welcome*, *allocate*, *participate* and *provide*). The military allusions persist (*robust*, *strategy* and *target*), but they are overtaken by visual proofs (*recognise*, *demonstrate*, *monitor* and *review*) of material wholeness (*body*, *robust*) and of constructive accomplishment (*design*, *make*, *achieve* and *mechanism*). From a divided and constrained situation, an organic formation is emerging.

The next section focuses on the part of the big picture that is concerned with improving the states of health, accomplishment and belonging of the teaching body in higher education.

Students and learning (paragraphs 31-35)

Figure 11 - Teaching



In the national context of the UK, the Vision calls into existence a professional association for university teachers, oriented in its aims toward benefits to students.

The aim of this part of the Vision is to establish an alternative framework of career advancement for academic staff: one that no longer relies on peer review and esteem among researchers. Instead, teaching staff should gain accreditation as managers of educational processes and technologies. That avenue is not offered as a dull programme of reform, but as one that is dynamic and transformative (as conveyed by the phrases 'immediately establish', 'stimulating innovation' and 'a radical change in attitudes').

Anyone reading this section may be struck by a mismatch between its title and its content. The latter is about the role of teaching staff rather than the 'Students and learning' of the title. If we imagine an academy of scholars (rather than segregated 'staff' and 'students') engaged in flows of ideas, there would appear to be a link missing between the title and the text. Such linkage may be furnished by the hierarchical and commercial structure that is implicit in much of the Committee's Vision. That structure can be understood as a model carried over from a pedagogic and hierarchically pedantic notion of primary and secondary schooling.

At a wholesale level, teachers as technicians are centrally supplied with an approved curriculum, plus approved materials and methods. Then at a retail level the classroom technicians deliver the prescribed dosage of learning to pupils or students. In modes of sales and maintenance, they also supply services of guidance and support to their young consumers. Overall, at the retail level, the teachers manage their students' learning, their own teaching practices and the stock of educational materials. (Further basic components of a commercial and industrial model are omitted here, such as production of the materials and the marketing activities required to estimate and stimulate demand.)

In this market-oriented model, students are treated both as short-term consumers of, and as long-term investors in, higher education. In a way, existing academic staff members are also turned into trainees, in that they must learn how to manage 'innovative teaching materials'. Even experienced staff may be expected to become accredited as teachers as if (formally) for the first time. The notion of a homogeneous (uni-formed?) teaching staff across all subject areas is akin to the unifying effects of ordination for pastoral activity as against religious professionalism. [cf. Kulananda 1996 p.54] We may contrast political and managerial control with professional self-governance, in terms of procedures taking the place of conscience. When we link that with a vigorous social role, we come close to Burton J. Bledstein's notion of the practice of a profession-as-discipline, 'comprising a coherent, integral, and self-contained domain, based on an equally self-contained "natural" state of things.' Within that:

> We see, then, that the emergence of professionalism may be understood as ... an effort to establish a measure of self-control, not, to be sure, on the part of isolated individuals, but of an extremely dynamic, unsettling, and powerful reorganization and transformation of society. [S. Weber 1997 pp.26-7, citing Bledstein 1976 p.90]

This is one area of the Vision that might well have referred to *professors*, yet almost pointedly does not. That absence may simply reflect the reality that much higher education takes place in colleges of further education where it is conducted by lecturers or tutors who may double as teachers of younger students. At the risk of reading too much into this absence—as a deliberate act of omission or exclusion—we may contrast the enthusiasm for the *profession(al)* teacher with a marginal (at best, in this context, or wholly redundant) concept of the autonomous *professor*. Yet the apparent gap may signify no abhorrence or unique omission; we only hear of the *lecturer* at one point (paragraph 71) of the Vision's text.

Broadly speaking, academic staff in higher education are to be inducted to a *teaching profession*, as a resource of central government for national ends, rather than into an academic career. In effect, they become civil servants recognised for interchangeable skills distinct from their disciplinary practices and understanding. The uniform national framework also treats them as commodities in a market, irrespective of distinctive factors such as speciality or local culture. This image is far removed from notions of personal charisma and mutual reliance among colleagues, assistants and students. It also guards against intrusion by academic or otherwise intellectual visitors, friends, itinerant scholars and correspondents at a distance.

This sense of commodified closure of a teaching profession sits oddly alongside the Vision's open-ended enthusiasm for technology. However, it would be unfair and anachronous to emphasise that contrast of *teacher* and *academic* given that the Internet has expanded, developed and become prominent far beyond its original context of research, largely since the Committee's reports were published in 1997. The Vision afforded perspectives of its time. We may surmise that its authors experienced setbacks that caused them to moderate early hopes

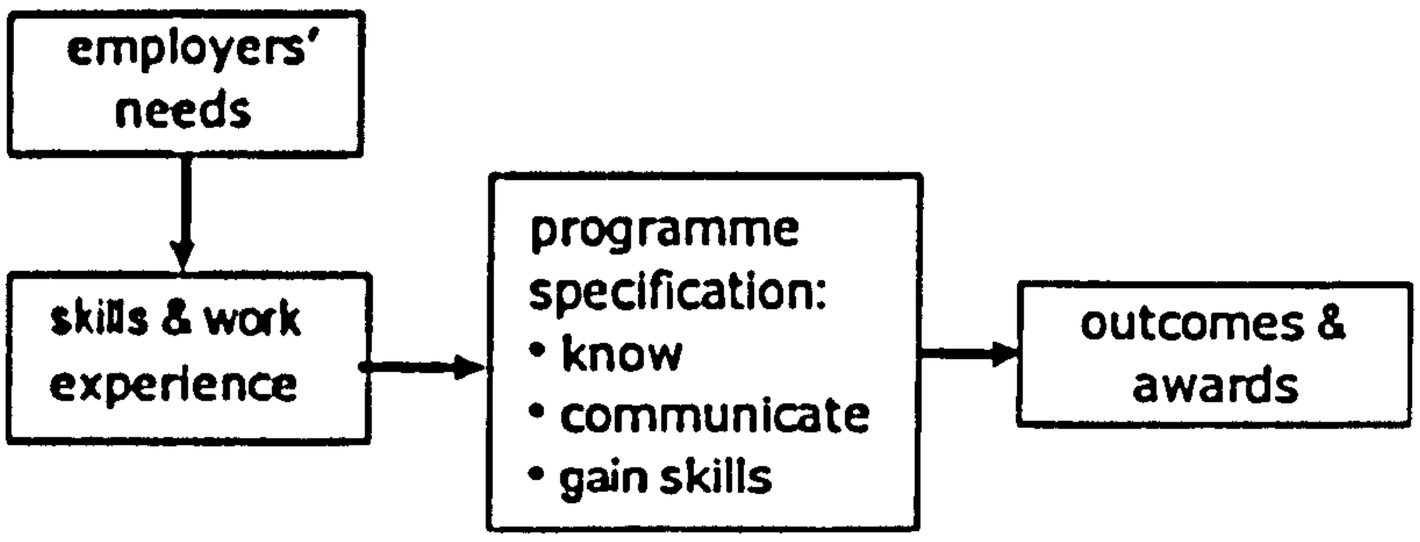
of technological liberation. At some point, the exploratory Vision of the way ahead may have become clouded and closed in on itself.

The language in this section particularly links *learning* and *teaching* with sight (*vision, survey, envisage* and *realise*). In a drive for connection (*depend, attitude*: Cassell: *aptus* joined to, depending on), it plays off stability (*institute, establish*) against the chance (*objective* Cassell: *jacio* to throw, and *research* Cassell: *circus* a place for games) of the original (*innovate, radical*). To that extent, the Vision anticipated the diverse, pervasive, connective, graphical tools of learning, teaching and research to which students and staff in the UK now have increasing on-line access locally and through the Internet.

Next, we will be urged to connect higher education with the world of employment by way of stable programmes for well-informed risk taking.

The nature of programmes (paragraphs 36-41)

Figure 12 - Programmes



The Vision specifies means of demonstrating both interim and final results of higher education, primarily to fill vacancies in the UK's job market.

The unit of reckoning is the *programme*. All programmes share a *nature* and each programme is called on to include certain ingredients for the benefit of students and their prospective employers. These ingredients are: knowledge across a breadth of subject matter, skills in communication, experience of relevant work, a history of personal progress (called a 'transcript of achievement') and statements as to outcomes and award levels. The other main theme here—of continuities from initial education (up to age 16) into higher education—affirms the Dearing Report's own place in a chain of studies for progressive educational reform across several decades and into its future.

The emphasis here is less on education in an exploratory sense than on shaping courses to suit industrial forms and agendas. These reflect a prescriptive rather than experimental notion of industrial activity. Higher education is oriented toward employment as its chief end. Students are produced to order or on a planned, 'just-in-time' basis. Courses and careers are predefined in a manner suited to formal documentation of processes, plus approval and monitoring, in the manner of industrial quality assurance and testing (to precise tolerances as for, say, the production of roller bearings). We can imagine the students as arriving in the job market equipped with relevant prior experience or at least with a formal identity specified by a prospective employer group and applied by the institution. This may not be as limiting as it sounds, since *just-in-time* implies responsiveness to demand. Although the process-oriented practices of 'quality assurance' are derived from industrial production and projects, they are now so widespread—in

various forms—that the framework called for here affords a topical variety of career options.

An academic career, though, traditionally has its own path through assistantships in teaching and research. It is guided by constant interaction within a department or centre and with the practitioners of a speciality around the world. The basic premise here is that in choosing a programme of study, a student selects a kind of occupation that is determined by it. When the destination is resolved as being academic, the resulting occupation must be teaching and-or research, to be arrived at by applying and extending the previously taught subject matter.

Within an industrial framework of 'quality' measurement for all programmes of study, that distinction may be offset by some flexibility for moving between academia and other walks of life including industrial and commercial settings—options that have to some extent always been available. However this section mainly assumes that students finish their studies, or at least gain interim awards, then commence or resume work outside of the higher educational setting. It treats measures of 'quality' as given, whereas in practice they must be shaped by actual priorities for employment. Ronald Barnett [2003 p.95] makes this point:

> If higher education is felt to be a matter of producing highly qualified manpower for the labour market, a definition of quality is likely to result that plays up employability as a measure of quality.

The apparent given-ness of quality criteria and procedures ignores the dimension of time. Any prediction of requirements in volatile economic situations is deeply problematic, as are definitions of employment and of what is to count as 'employability' and preparation for the world (which world, precisely?) of work.

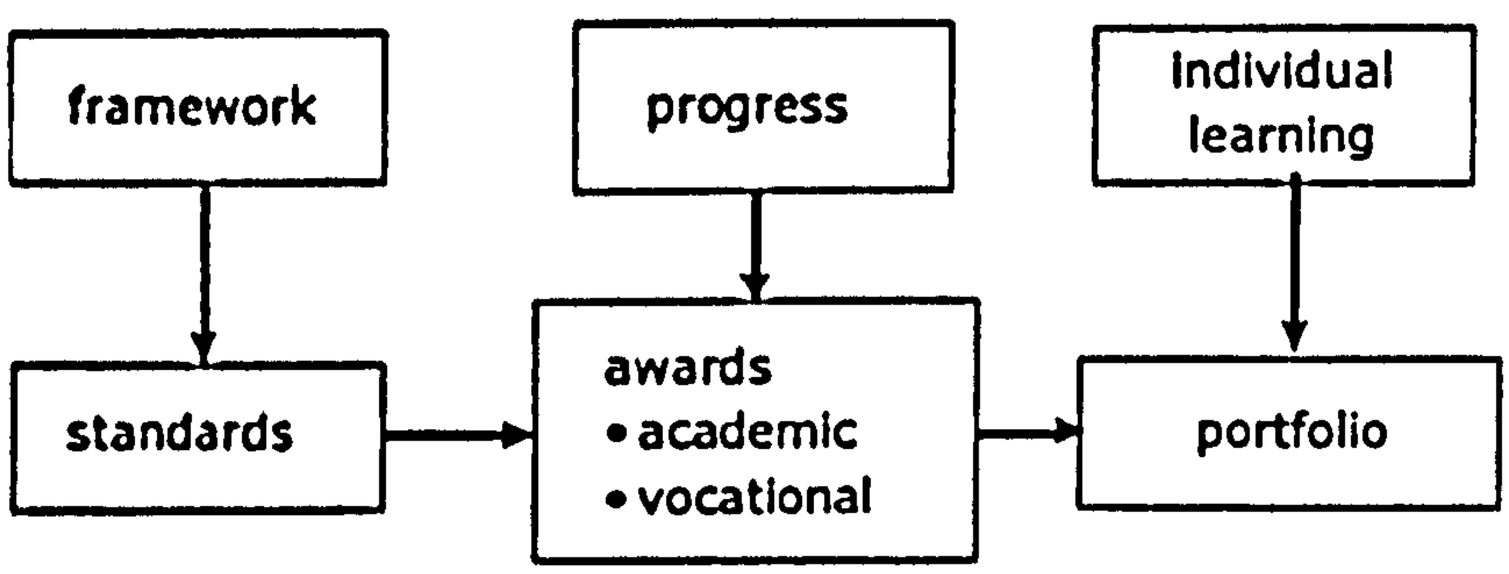
In cruder terms we may suppose that in the Vision, staff and students are co-opted for conversion to automata by a machine—a state apparatus to service the UK's industrial, administrative and military complex—for an assured annual output of closely specified degrees. No deviance or digression will be tolerated. From a eugenic point of view, the mental faculty or illusion of free will becomes atavistic: a throwback to more primitive conditions of existence. Evidently there is no place here, and this is not the time, for fanciful pursuits and experimentation. Enthusiasm may be tolerated, so long as the result conforms to the specification.

The language here is laden with metaphors of place (*about, between, broad, close, depth, focus, forward, narrow, over, place, point, range, up to, upon, wide, within,* etc.) and of time (*after, before, day, during, frequent, last, recent, throughout* and *year*). It seeks a secure locus in time and space for our movement (*enter, include, leave, (out)come* and *stop*) and our thinking (*know, cognitive, intellect, understand,* and *recognise*). The metaphors call for (*advocate*) a decisive (*concern*—Cassell: *cerno* to separate) knock (*debate*—Cassell: *battuo* to beat) into shape (*format*—Cassell: *forma* a figure) in a forward direction (*intend*—Cassell: *intendo* to direct towards). Ready, steady, shove!

The next part of the Vision will map out a space for accomplishment and wrestle with prejudices firmly located in time and place.

Qualifications and standards—framework (paragraphs 42-45)

Figure 13 - Standards



This section seeks to establish a unified framework of 'levels' for both vocational and academic accomplishments. That stratified framework should help students to gather awards from a range of available qualifications and help to document their progress in doing so. The Vision enjoins us to value intellectual and practical pursuits equally and for individual students to accumulate both kinds of award.

The notion of a *standard* is central to this thinking. It refers to a measure by which even disparate objects may be judged, and is inflected by a sense of *standing* as prestige (OHD). Standards are also invoked here to establish parity of esteem for awards of the same type, irrespective of the awarding institution or the historical time of the award. They must represent universal and timeless values, not compromised by such mundane matters as traditional prejudices, market valuations or any empirical measurement of their effects. However in practice tradition, current valuations and the occupational outcomes of awards do feed each other in inextricable ways that—often quite unreasonably—sustain differences of esteem among awarding schemes and among institutions. So to realise the Vision, we would have to compromise in defining the standards by making them relevant to the prevailing perceptions of, demand for, and occupational success of the qualifications that they govern.

Perhaps a more tangible, though more subjective, basis of judgement can be provided for individuals. A *portfolio* provides a visual mode of proof, to present evidence of prowess and achievement. It combines identity and responsibility in the sense of a container for separate papers, investments or ministerial duties (OHD). Its use in contexts of the visual arts and crafts—e.g. for a portfolio of drawings—imparts a sense of creativity and variety for demonstrating proficiency and versatility in a range of styles. Against that allusion to imagination and choice we may pose a particular destiny in view (end, *telos*) for most of the learning and teaching activities in the Vision. Essentially, the automata that are students appearing to choose their studies and staff appearing to define curricular content, each enjoy an illusion of choice and self-determination. The range of options—'opportunities to study'—are prescribed mainly for economic ends and advertised with prospects of personal prosperity so as to generate desires that will motivate staff, students and advisers at each moment. They sustain a closed, speculative job market, with every member watching and (over-)reacting to events, as if in a trading hall or network for exchanging commodity futures.

Through its language, this section observes its domain (*see, envisage* and *recognise*). It seeks to demarcate (Cassell: *encompass, scope* and *designate*) that which is *inside* from what is *outside*. What is inside must be proper (Cassell:

appropriate, *clarify*), not mixed (Cassell: *confusion*) nor artificial (Cassell: *designate* to contrive; OED: *emphasis* as illusion and OHD: *frame* to concoct). Toward that end, it is to be afforded help (Cassell: *adopt*, *aspire* and Liddell: *scope*).

The suggestion of a clearly surveyed and bounded domain of knowledge and control is at odds with more dynamic and interactive views of frameworks and institutions. For instance Catherine Fieschi presents a radically fluid view of the institution in general [2001, in her *Conclusion*]:

> Institutions are understood here as a series of processes in which education, experience, leadership and practice over time are both the shaper and the "shaped". ... [political institutions] are both processes and rules that govern processes (institutions with an organizational component). They are both practice over time and the framework for these practices.

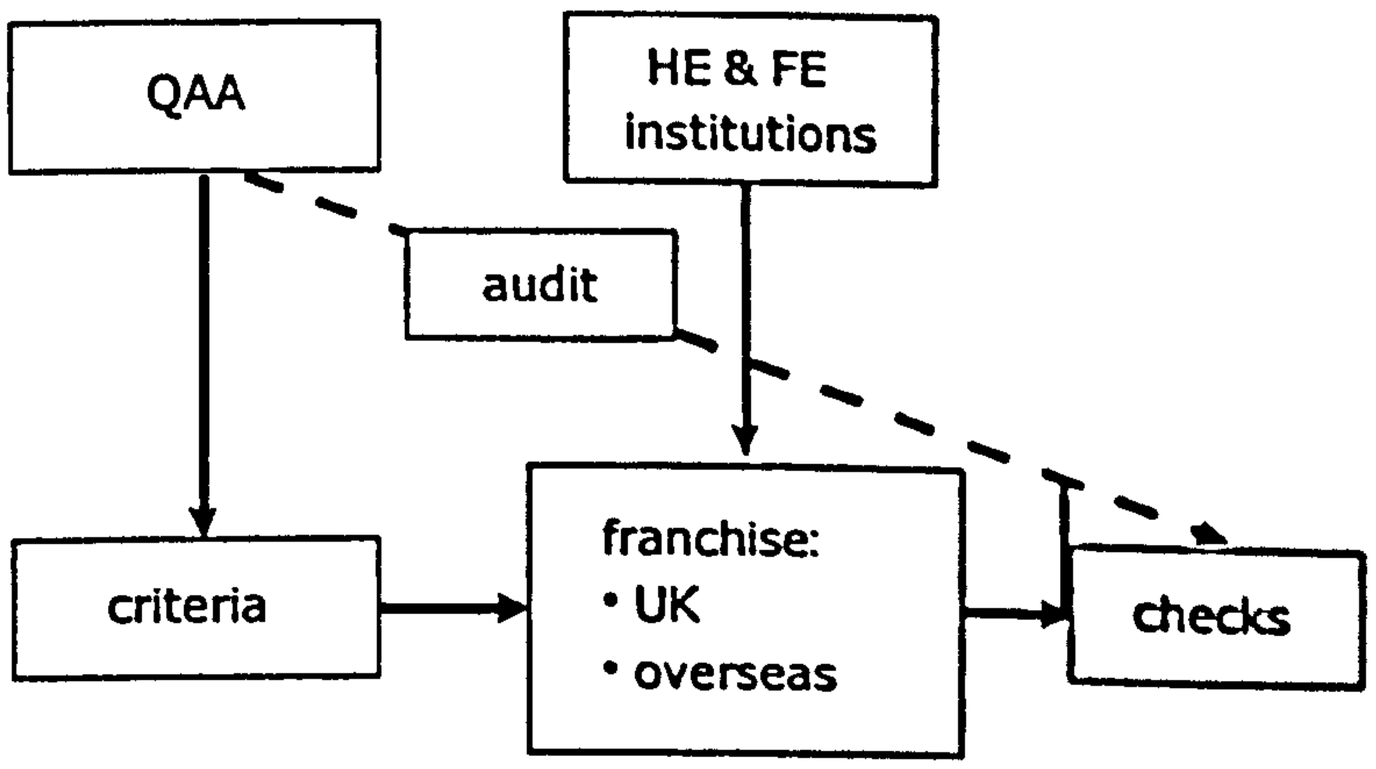
So, in a wider context, does Ronald Barnett [2000 p.77 in *Brave new world*]:

> The world is radically unknowable. Every framework for knowing and every sense of our world, of ourselves and of our relationships to the world and to each other is contestable.

The next section picks on a set of ambitious administrative arrangements among institutions that seem to have got out of hand. It proposes a framework for knowing them, overseeing them and, if required, forcing them into shape.

Qualifications and standards—franchising (paragraphs 46 & 50)

Figure 14 - Franchising



In the Vision, the remit of the Quality Assurance Agency is extended to overseeing arrangements for the situation in which one institution runs courses produced and certified by another ('franchising'). The aim is to ensure the soundness of such agreements both among UK institutions (typically from universities to colleges of further education) and those overseas (mainly between UK higher educational institutions and colleges abroad).

Let us express the matter starkly: here the post-compulsory institutions appear to be treated as untrustworthy agents, insofar as they are unfit to govern their own franchising activities voluntarily and without external scrutiny. Reported instances of malpractice are justly or harshly considered to furnish a pretext for overseeing all institutions' franchising operations. The Quality Assurance Agency—

as an overseer whose probity, capability and capacity are here unquestioned—is appointed to frame and enforce a set of rules.

> Aside: This appears to be at variance with the empowering spirit of quality assurance as *practice*; we see here a perverse simulacrum.

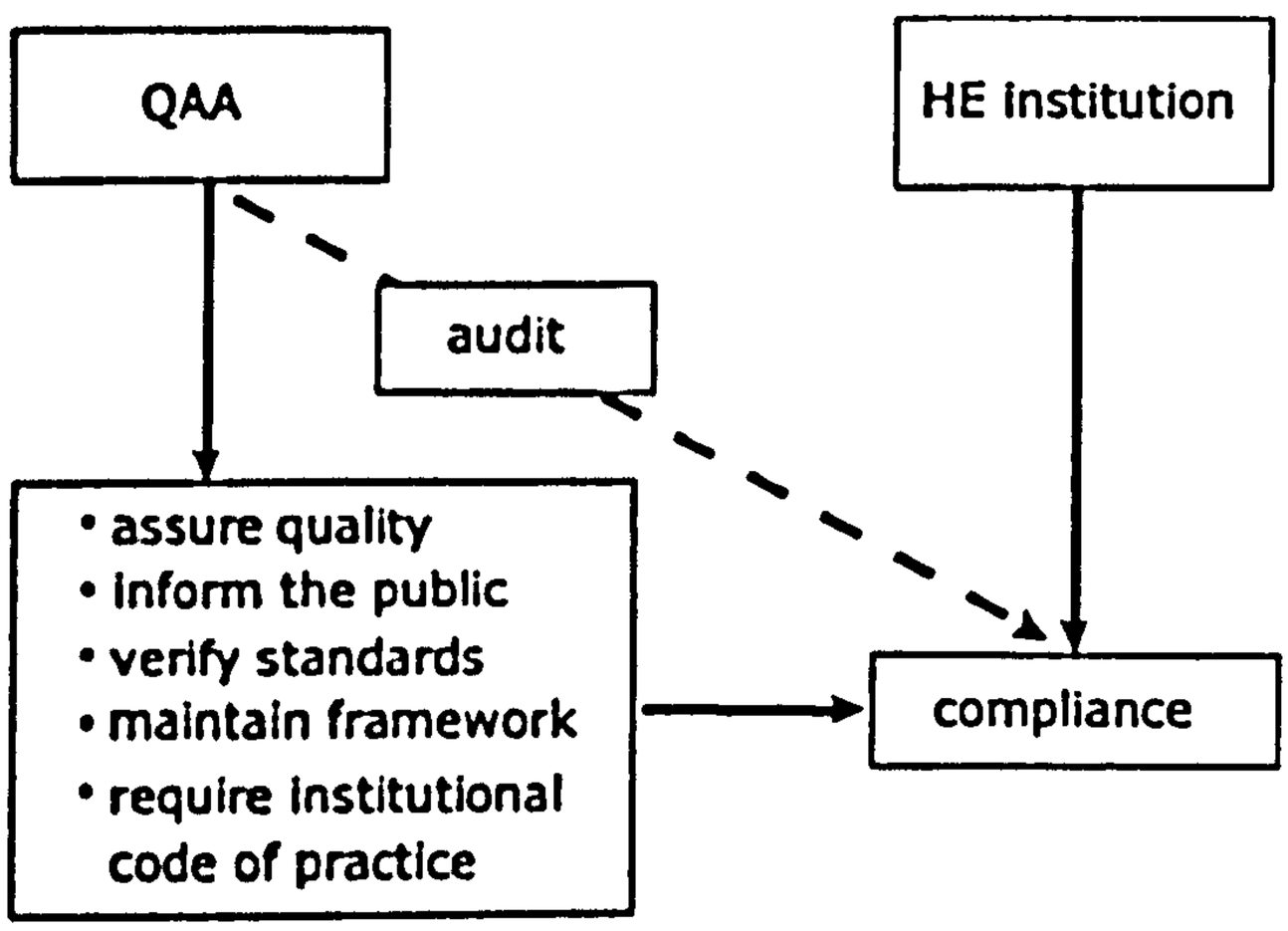
The effect is to reinforce the long-standing hierarchy that subordinates further education to higher education (each viewed both as an activity and an institution), and to subject both of those institutional sectors to tighter control by central government through the Quality Assurance Agency. Perhaps the universities and colleges in its sights are scapegoats, so to speak, for other institutions that would be more resistant to being beaten into submission.

This section's use of language is concerned with expanding territory (*further, broad, expand, extend* and *overseas*). We are called to prepare (*adopt* Cassell: *adopto, apparatus*) for a brilliant (Cassell: *apparatus*, again) opportunity. However, we emphatically must exercise judgement (*standard, prejudice, quality, institution, encourage* and *audit*) if we are to be confident (*believe; sure* Cassell: *securus* free from care) of retaining (*continue, maintain*) our freedom (*franchise* OED: *francu*). We should reach out prudently so as not to over-reach ourselves and be impounded.

The Vision next continues to pursue the play of discretion and compulsion, and adds reputation to what is at stake.

Qualifications and standards—the QAA (paragraphs 47-48 & 50)

Figure 15 - Agency



Here the Vision upholds the perceived quality of higher education in the UK, especially as it affects the UK's reputation and serves as an instrument for attracting students from other countries. To do so, it seeks to amend the Quality Assurance Agency's remit and to make each higher educational institution reflect that national remit in a code of practice so as to qualify for public funding.

This is a drive to codify matters for which higher education is to be held to account. Self-supervisory functions are partly transferred from higher educational

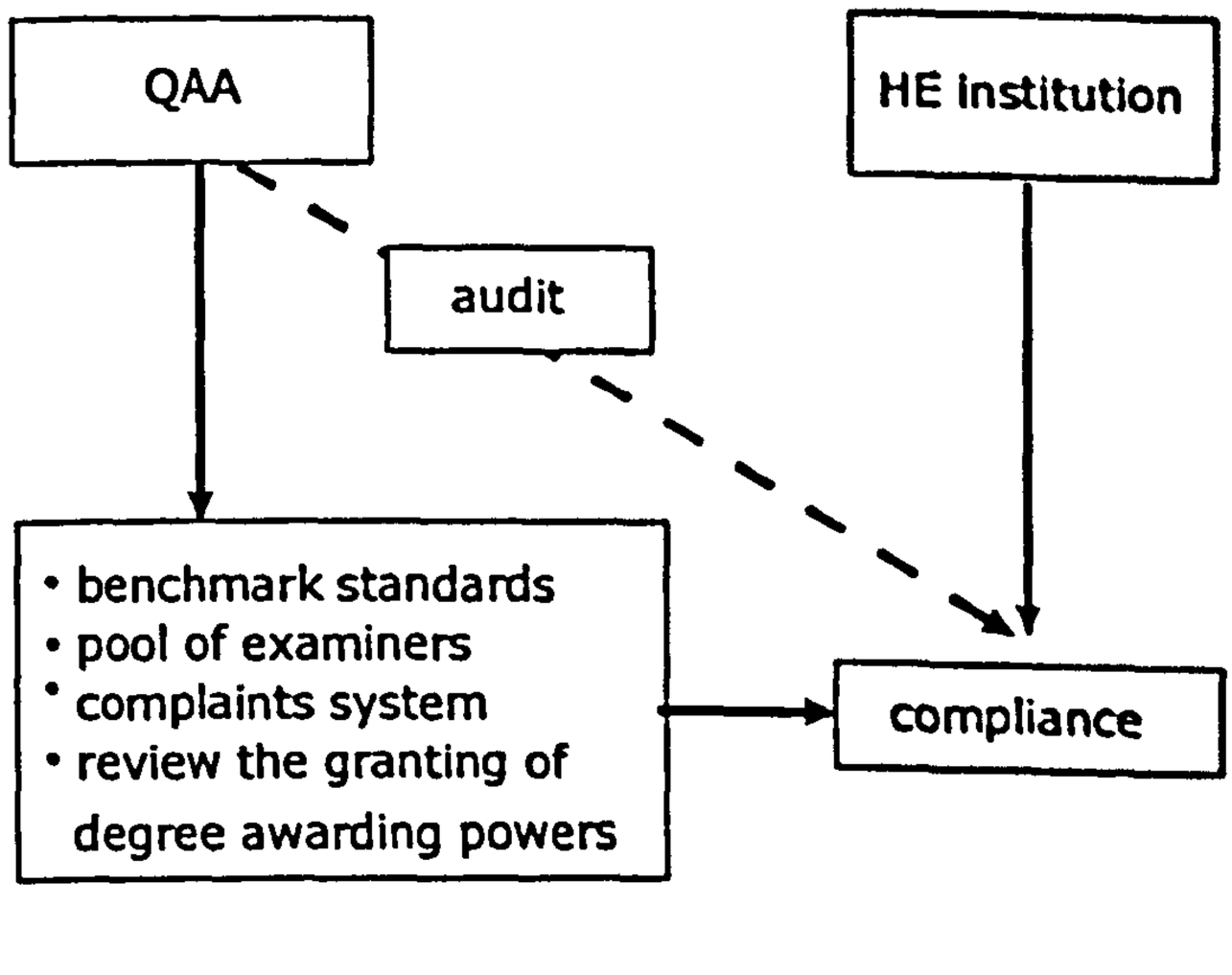
institutions to the Quality Assurance Agency. The framework of qualifications and of the standards for their contents is required to exist at a national level. Codes of practice to regulate institutional behaviour—by way of processes that have external effects—are to be declared for approval and enforcement. The activity of informing the public is associated with 'quality' as a part of how an institution presents itself, with consequences that hinge on what it says and does. Every institution is to make a public example of itself; woe betide any one that attracts adverse publicity.

This section's language is highly comparative (*quality, expand, reduce, increase, extent, standard* and *repute*—Cassell: *puto* to compute, weigh or reflect). It grounds those comparisons in onlookers' belief and devotion (*study, apparatus, sure* and *repute* again—Cassell: *puto* to hold or believe). Since by this stage we have left principle or scruple well behind, the plea for good behaviour is based not on harm previously done, legality or moral rectitude but on lapses in performance being bad for business. Our actions henceforth must be calculated to impress our customers and outdo competitors.

The next part of the Vision is devoted to the process of appointing guardians of our reputations.

Qualifications and standards—external examiners (paragraphs 49 & 50)

Figure 15 - Examiners



Here priority is assigned to tasks in which institutions of higher education and the Quality Assurance Agency strive jointly to overcome variations across institutions in the standards for awarding degrees.

In this part of the Vision, a whole 'academic community' exists to share responsibility. (cf. its demise in favour of individualism, as discussed by Ronald Barnett [2003 p.129]) Formerly there was a 'small community' that followed 'established practice'; now it is a 'system' of higher education. The system relies on 'measures' of performance that we are urged to regard as absolutes through the metaphor of national 'benchmarks' as if they were to be used for physical measurement. They constitute ideals, in particular, for awarding degrees and for reckoning the worth of a degree at any time or place before or after award.

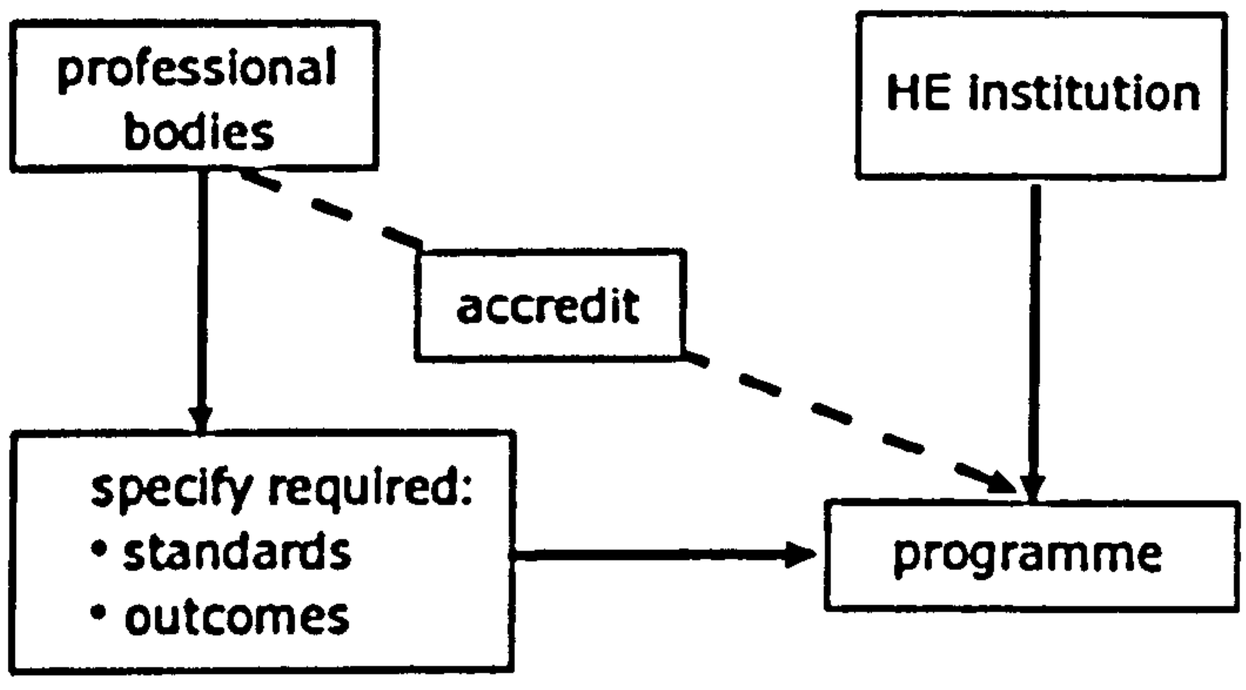
There is a call here to scrutinise the manner in which rights to award degrees are conferred. That manifests a broad unease in the Vision as to who authorises the relevant authorities (who guards the guardians of academic esteem), so that their awards will be universally recognised and respected. The standards of recognition must not be compromised by unauthorised judgements. Only specialists—akin to priests of a sanctum, or scientists at a national laboratory of physics—can be relied on to convince a sceptical public or to act in our collective interest, even without the public's understanding. In particular, academic staff should no longer serve as 'external' examiners (across institutions) unless they are 'recognised' as such by the Quality Assurance Agency. The interplay here is between agreeable standards of currency among peers, on the one hand, and accountability to and of the guardians of absolute values on the other. *Do we recognise that person?*

The language used here invokes a highly reciprocal and consensual social order (*accept, common, community, correspond, diverse, meet, responsible* and *share*). It allows us to enjoy universal (*general, common, share* again and *whole*) unity and health (*common, community, share* and *whole* again, *well* and *sure*) with parity (*(in)adequate, standard*). The order has to be fixed (*establish, system, institution, build, create* and *remain*) and secured (*award*, cf. *guard*; *assure* and *ensure*) by technical means (*effective, mechanism* and *apparatus*). Universal wellbeing will be most agreeable yet it must be protected by an effective system.

The next section addresses an interplay of accountability and autonomy.

Qualifications and standards—professional bodies (paragraph 51)

Figure 17 - Professional bodies



This part of the Vision aims to encourage professional bodies to become more involved in specifying programmes of higher education. Each such body is invited to do so for the corresponding academic discipline, mainly in terms of requirements placed on the interim and final results of each relevant programme.

The established 'we' of the Vision treats the representatives of professions as honoured guests. The higher educational institutions' teaching warrants scrutiny. Professional bodies' probity, capacity and capability, like that of the Quality Assurance Agency, are beyond question. The professional bodies are urged to step in to help with framing the rules and accrediting the criteria of judgement for assessing students and making awards. Professional practitioners are thus regarded as witnesses of the worlds of nature and humanity. They are

uniquely fitted to providing yardsticks (metre-sticks?), as it were, to calibrate the measures of students' fitness and accomplishments in academia.

This resort to external guidance as to what to approve for the best incurs a charge of surrendering autonomy, as found in the interplay of ethics and science. Nigel Warburton summarises this interplay from Jean-Paul Sartre's lecture [Paris, 1945] on *Existentialism and Humanism* as follows: [N. Warburton pp.57-9]

> We all have to choose our values for ourselves, and there is no simple answer to ethical questions. We cannot work out what we should do from a scientific description of the way the world is; but nevertheless we are all forced to make ethical decisions. It is an aspect of the human condition that we have to make these value judgements, but without any firm guidelines from outside ourselves. Naturalism in ethics is a self-deceptive denial of this freedom to choose for ourselves.

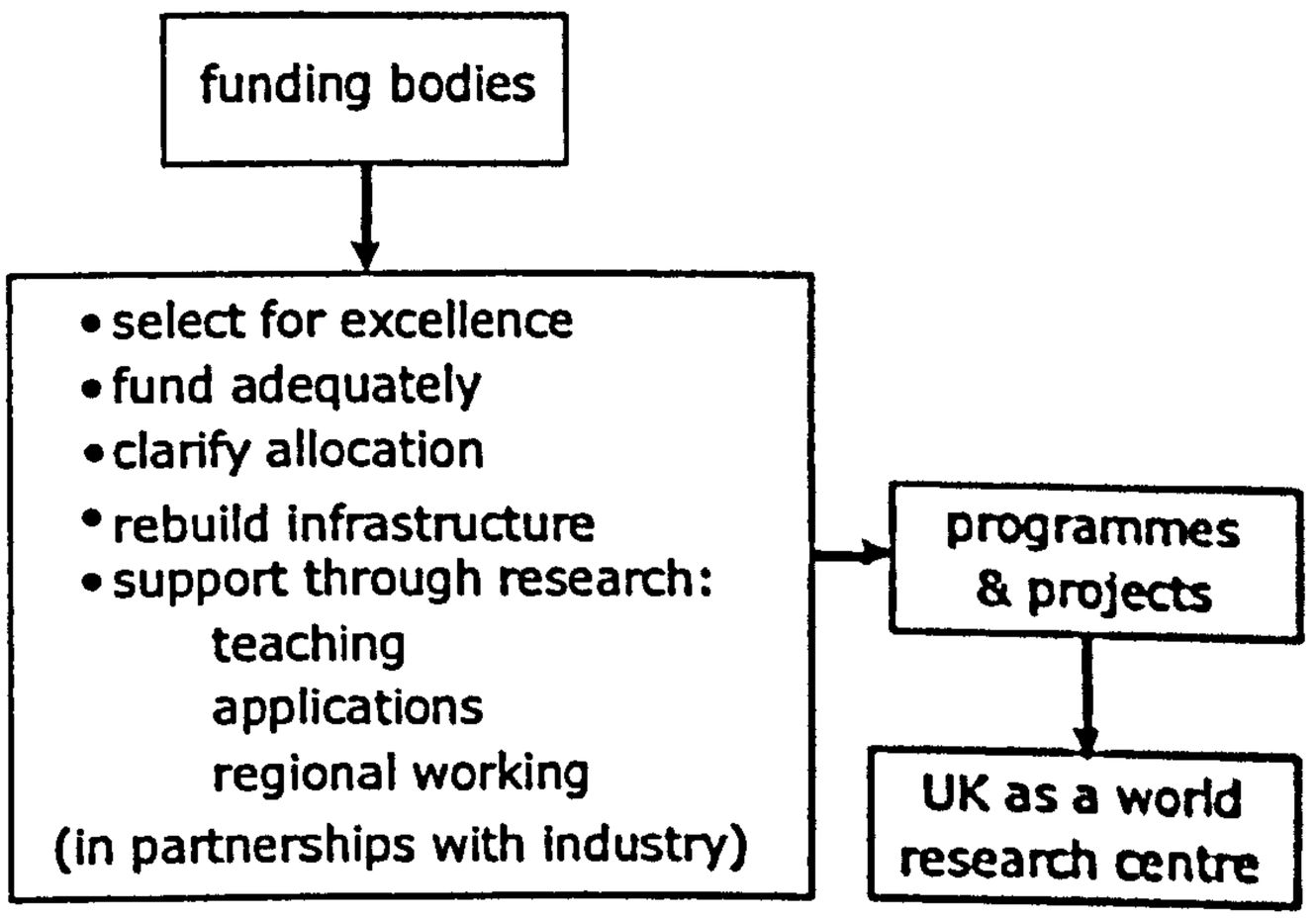
In a sense, though, the Vision is treating each professional speciality as the chief end *(telos)* and matured self-as-other of the corresponding body of scholars (students and academic staff). That holistic model closes the gap between practitioners and academia by adapting the time dimension to reverse the systemic roles of (former) student and teacher. Experience of the past plus present custom teaches us what to apply in the future, while academic staff members are assigned the task of learning to putting it into effect. (Dual roles of practitioner-*cum*-teacher, where they occur, do not avoid that reversal.)

The section's language is preoccupied with forming outcomes. It pursues a programme, sets standards, determines concerns, establishes a basis (principle) and requires a degree (*gradus* a step, position, grading or combatant's post) of profession (OED *profess* to hold allegiance to a principle as distinct from practice). Its model is the engineer who designs, causes or begets complexity [cf. Ronald Barnett 2001 on *Supercomplexity*].

> The next section forms a complex structure.

Supporting scholarship and research—purposes (paragraphs 52-57)

Figure 18 - Purposes of research



The Vision seeks to remedy cumulative shortfalls ascribed to 'under-investment' in Government funding of academic research. That investment has to

serve ends that include public benefits to be derived from research activities into higher educational teaching, plus benefits from promoting co-operation (within 'partnerships') between industry and higher educational institutions.

The focus on research reinforces an existing dichotomy of activities, and of institutions, between research and teaching. At one extreme of the spectrum of possibilities we would find the research institute, in which postgraduates would build their experience, as apprentices, and professional researchers would pursue their careers unhampered by a further workload of teaching. At the other extreme we would find the teaching-only institution. It would be largely dependent on preparatory or foundation courses, first degrees, short courses and training for occupational development. At either extreme, we would have cause to question use of the term 'university' to describe the institution (rather than calling it a 'research institute' or a 'training college') especially if undergraduate studies were not the mainstay of the teaching workload in the latter case.

The Vision here seeks to promote research funding by way of 'revolving loan' investment. That mechanism marks a shift away from a diffuse notion of benefit to society and toward treating the research capacity of a university or department as an outright business (using capital to generate profit for its shareholders, or breaking-even if not-for-profit). More precisely, it resembles the use of venture capital to incur large or indeterminate risks for the chance of high returns in a relatively short time, so as to make more funds available to re-cycle into further projects (and-or to limit the liability for losses).

The notion of scholarship here also implies the use of a kind of capital—intellectual capital—that requires the maintenance of knowledge in a serviceable condition. By associating it with business-like research, the Vision promotes the prospecting aspect of scholarship. It is thus far removed from any context of obsessive gathering and sifting, where it would seem as if researchers and their sponsors were driven by the memory, and threat of return, of some traumatic period of scarcity.

> Aside: An assumed scarcity might be conjured to drive our efforts. As Guy Claxton suggests of 'acquisitiveness ... [p]ossessiveness and pride': '... a mean-spirited attitude assumes scarcity and makes us competitive.' [1990 p.58]

Yet whereas the Vision places research and scholarship in a setting of institutional and international competition, it presents it more on a basis of excellence among abundance rather than of scarcity and meagre survival. An imbalance exists here that may perhaps give rise to a threat of swift, wholesale take-overs of research and teaching institutions by private and/or external interests. We need to consolidate our position, fast, and prepare to let go of whatever would cost us too much to defend.

The section's language raises existential concerns both explicitly in time (*has been, there is* and *to be*) and implicitly (*need, necessary* and *whether*). It places those concerns between arrival and unwilling departure: *create, cost* (*consto*: to exist; also as in *cost their lives*: to sacrifice); *teach* (OED as in: to bid adieu), and *depart* (separate). It also emphatically places the concerns at negative limits (*no, nor, non, not, but* and *without*). For a text that mostly pursues flexibility, persuasion and appeasement, there is an unusual degree of grounding at work in this passage. That groundwork is required for structure (*underpin, infrastructure, establish, level,* plus both *fund* and *support*: as a base, to strengthen); or more precisely for reconstruction (*resource* from *resurgo,* to rise up or be rebuilt). The trope of building proves inadequate when we try to

invest it with a dynamic meta-stability that consists in continual change by mutual and self-reformation. The process of reproduction is complex and diverse. It occurs in the rich nexus of *institution*, *teaching* and *research*: shaping while being shaped, circular or spiral in form, promoting control and trust in a social and public context, and delivering itself (of itself).

We can pick up those colourful strands through *institution* as an act of origin that organises an element of a society [Raymond Williams 1988 pp.168-9]. There are processes through which the shaper is shaped [C. Fieschi 2001, *Conclusion*], a constant state of flux and evolution [C. Fieschi 2001 section III, paraphrasing Michael Freeden] and a role of the university as a meta-institution, inquiring about its ever-evolving sense of itself, to replenish itself [R. Barnett 2000 pp.79-80]. The strands show up variously in the *teaching* of information about knowledge, as if by showing samples in a bazaar (*teach* Cassell / Liddell: *deiknumi, deigma*). Also they appear by causing reason (of) itself [J. Derrida 1993 p.24, about the architect-leader-teacher of Aristotle's Metaphysics] and by re-framed human relations based on bold formulations of ideas [R. Barnett 2000 pp.79 & 162]. Then there is the self-interpretive truth of literature at the limits of public access [P. Kamuf 1997 pp.160-1 in R. Rand 1992].

Densely, the strands bind *research* into that nexus by circular games (Cassell: *circus*), with public intellectuals promoting informed views of educational issues [R. Barnett 2000 p.162]. They entwine illusions of public interest, disinterestedness and objectivity [R. Young in R. Rand 1992]; and control the self's desire to study the world (the Other) so as to organise it through a theory into a written text (the Same) [J. Scheurich 1997 p.85]. In a deconstructive manœuvre [cf. J. Derrida's 1994a *The Principle of Reason...*], reason is *instituted* retrospectively by declaring a *principle* that then provides the necessary grounds (*underpin, base*) for a reshaping action.

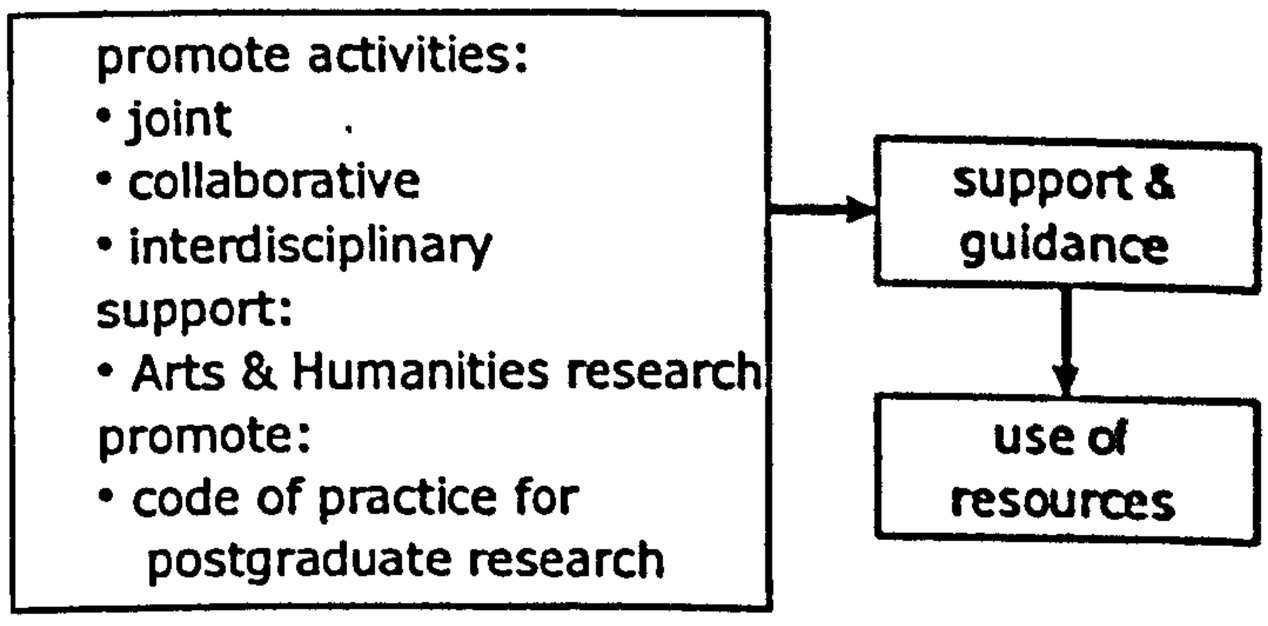
This seething mass of allusion confirms the Vision's confidence in academic research as a vital, though wayward, resource for legitimising—however nominally—the rest of its proposals.

In a much less complex manner, yet still in an existential mode, the next section blends rationality with a creative spirit.

> Aside: From this point in the chapter, for ease of scanning, the lexical references are seldom attributed.

Supporting scholarship and research—specifics (paragraphs 58-60)

Figure 19 - Research specifics



In this miscellaneous passage, the Vision seeks to instil better co-ordinated and codified arrangements for research in the context of higher education.

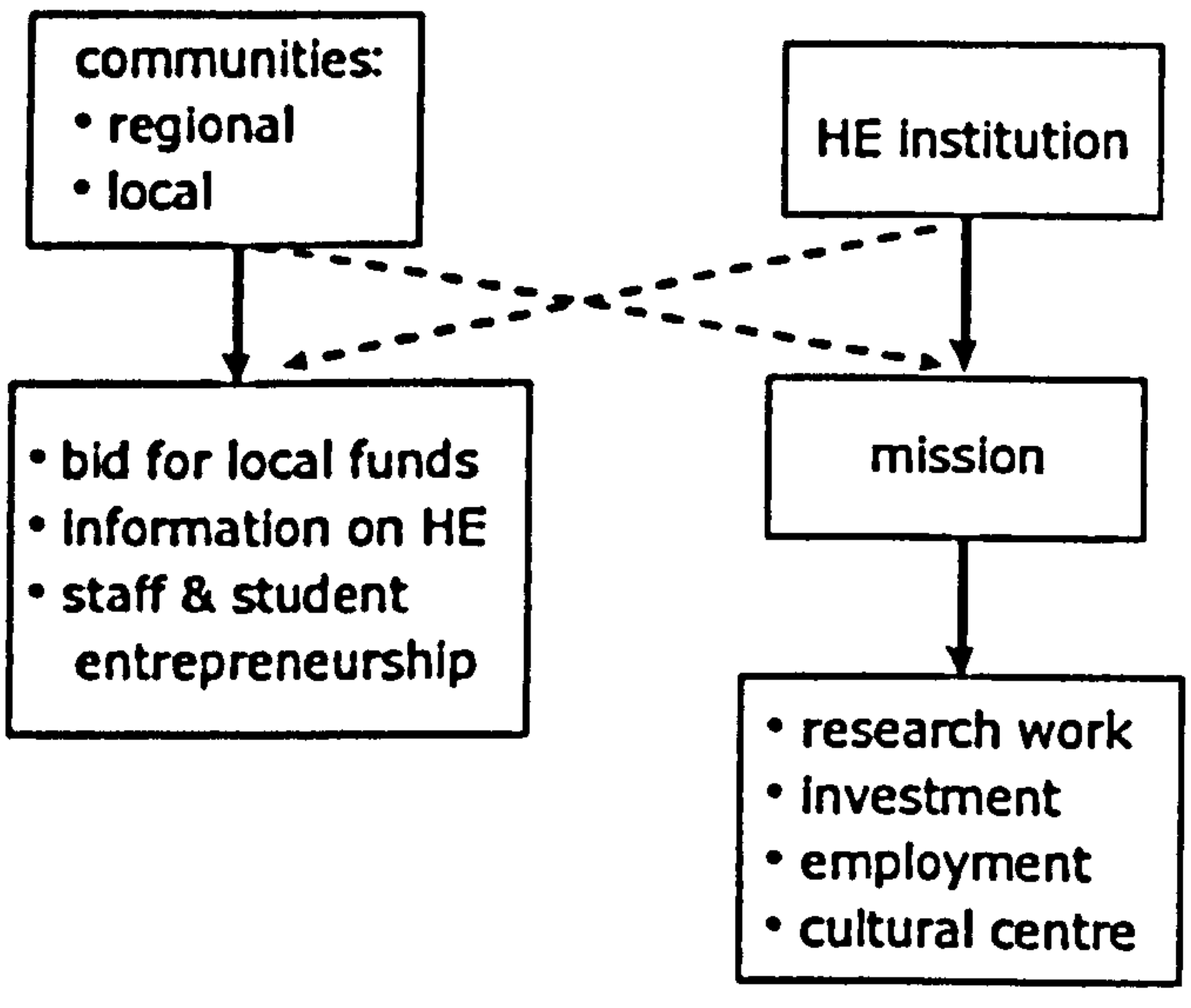
To an extent, it works against the movement for UK research to become oriented toward, and dominated by, industrial concerns. In particular it seeks to organise and promote research, especially in the 'arts and humanities'; that is to say, in disciplines and pursuits that sustain cultural scholarship and the creative arts. However, the proposed means of doing so resemble the existing norms in the natural, biological and human sciences: *joint, collaborative, research council* and *code of practice*. As noted in the previous section, following James Joseph Scheurich [J.J. Scheurich 1997 p.85], we are here called on to organise the world into the Same.

The existential theme that dominates the language of this passage seems fatalistic: *there is, end, expect, need* (for survival, as distinct from desire [R. Scruton p.319]), *humanity* (in respect of fate) and *resource* (to rise again). Authoritarian tones (*require, endorse* and *strong*) are mingled with those of moderation (*chair* of a moderator, *propose, review, inform, promote* and *guide*). The passage promotes utility (*obtain, use* and *resource*) and productivity (*collaborate, establish, practi[s]e* and *make*). The moderation is played out amongst rationality: *better, best* (of the harmonious good, in an Aristotelian sense) and *reasonable*. It engages the spirit: *art* (in Hegel: absolute truth through perception and feeling; the divine) and the physical (Langenscheidt: *physis* in regard to nature and purpose, creative); plus 'different functions to fulfil and differing modes of succeeding in life'. [M. Ryle & K. Soper 2002 p.26 citing Plato, Republic *Book 3*, 412-415] The Vision seems to falter among these themes (is that all we came to say?), as if it were confused by its situation and the potential modes or means of improving it.

The next section will seek to overcome an isolated human destiny by connecting with the spirit of the people.

The local and regional role of higher education (paragraphs 61-64)

Figure 20 - Locality



The Vision here seeks to promote ties between higher educational institutions and their local and regional situations.

To that extent, it presents itself as a call for local action to complement the centralising, bureaucratic thrust of the Vision. Here the primary, regional role of higher education is economic. Cultural activities and effects are called forth to supplement that role. The primacy of economic thinking risks loss of intimacy, cohesion and self-recognition. If each higher educational institution is to furnish a clear local and regional mission, that will render it amenable to external planning and monitoring by regional chambers of the central State. The controlling impulse strives to act for the best, to foster local society. It seeks to bring about freedoms from economic hardship and cultural decline, through comprehensive regional revival. This impulse responds to calls for resurgence, such as for '... the total awakening of human personalities, human families, village communities, urban communities, national communities and the world community.' [A.T. Ariyaratne 1999 p.26] It calls on us to co-operate and to co-ordinate our efforts by '... doing something concrete' rather than just 'maintain[ing] economic stability ...' and 'to create a full-engagement society' from 'the concept of right livelihood at the community level.' [A.T. Ariyaratne 1999 p.34] Thus we shall surmount our personal limitations and realise our social potential through communal, practical efforts.

The use of language here connotes a transition from the intimate (familiar) to the public sphere. It sustains a visual theme, especially in terms of (re)marking: *region* (*regio*: a direction, a boundary line; in augury: the line of sight), *clear*, *recognise* (as with a pledge or bond), *note* (*nota* with marks of origin, disgrace or honour), *envisage* (opposite to, or imaginary) and *signify*. The notion of bounds (of territory or opportunity) is implied by *local* (*locus* a place, occasion, opportunity, post; *loci* means of proof) and protected by *strong* and *force*. The section pursues social connectivity in the ways we noted in previous sections: *we/our*, *support*, *contribute*, *economy* and *institution*. It also does so in more intimate ways. These are marked by *foster* (OED: to cherish, as guardian; cf. *chamber*, *camera* and *kamara* where a vault affords protection), *local* (*loca*, a region or neighbourhood), *attract* (*attraho* to draw, drag or take with one) and *conscious*.

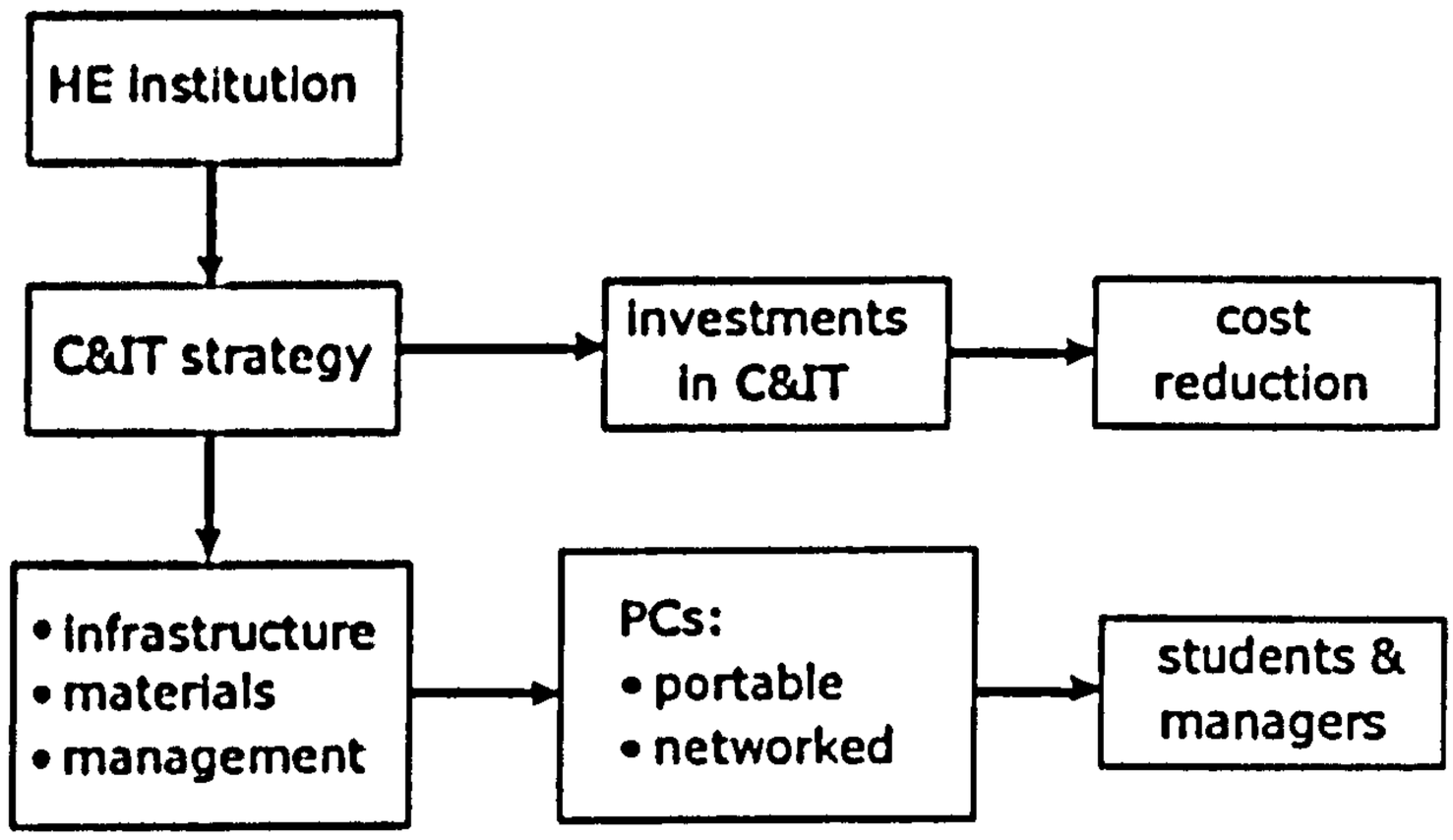
> Aside: cf. Hegel's Jena philosophy of spirit that 'describes the *transition* from the family to the people', which is also rendered by Derrida as a relief of universality as follows: '... in the course of a struggle for recognition, the family loses and reflects itself in another consciousness: the people.'). [Derrida 1990 p.108]

In short, the text marks with respect the intimate and formal bounds of a universal, social self-awareness; perhaps that of an extended family in transition—and hence dissolution—into a public role.

The next part of the Vision develops a material basis for a collective will and understanding: a dynamic body that finds its self (*auton*) in processes of automation.

Communications and Information technology (paragraphs 65-68)

Figure 21 - Technologies



This section seeks to promote higher educational institutions' investments in facilities for Communications and Information Technologies (C&IT).

A prime motive here is to realise long-term cost reductions through students' and administrators' access to those facilities, so as to render more effective—and perhaps in part supplant—more labour-intensive modes of teaching, learning and administrative activities. We may view the place of the address here figuratively as something of a building site: in particular, a site of salvage and reconstruction. For its portal, the section seeks to establish the reified concepts of Communications and Information, standing on their technological bases like columns with capitals, as one monumental edifice. The packaged nature of C&IT would systematise—regiment and routinise—the delivery of course materials (paragraphs 15, 20 & 27). The system would then be amenable to intense scrutiny and would warrant a total (re-)certification of staff to join its hitherto closed cult.

To attract investment in an enterprise or project, it is vital to impart a sense of closure to the concept of an 'infrastructure' that may be 'completed' in a finite time, then pass into 'maintenance' mode so that it can be 'harnessed' and 'exploited' (paragraphs 66-67). The Vision conveys a dream of automation, to bring benefits of determinable quality and flexibility through placing at our command a structural power with which to change things. The Committee seems to be enamoured with technologies both of communications and of information, bundled together, perhaps as a panacea for many shortages and a talisman of abundant educational capacity to come. The Committee's singular, uncritical view stands in contrast to the potential range of views one might find among investors, strategic planners, system designers, implementers and potential users of such evolving, disturbing and possibly de-skilling automation. The Vision looks to clear the site of outmoded alternatives, to make way for constructive action. Welcome again to *Supercomplexity*. [R. Barnett 2000]

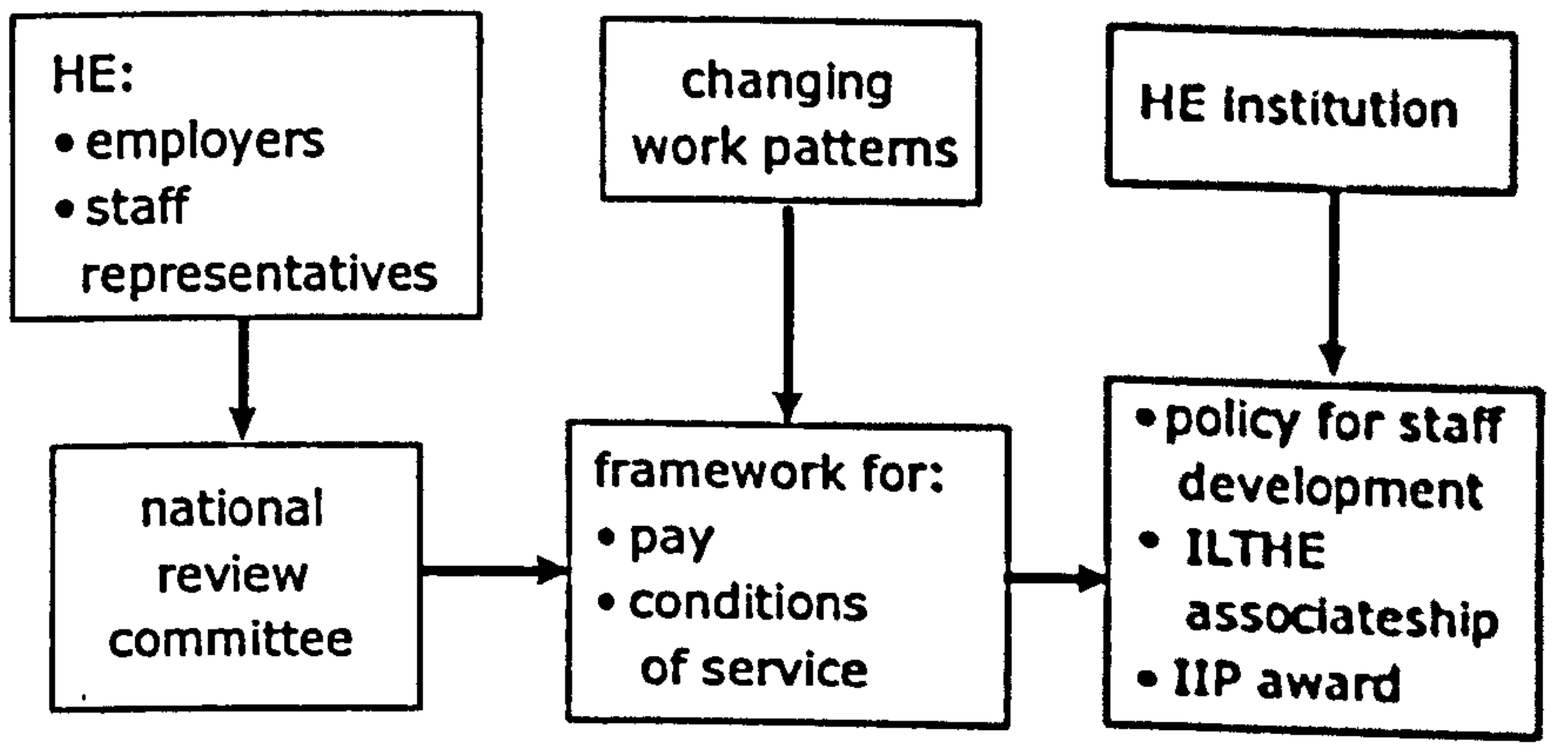
The section's language promotes urgent practicality. The call for timeliness (*already, soon, latest, short, time, still* and *stage*) reinforces the call for action (*how, can, make, use, develop, technology, means* and *resource*). That action is poised on a firm and vigorous material basis (*body, leap, overarching, infrastructure, flexibility, portable* and *material*). We must be clear who we are, as distinct from a nebulous they (*we, own, identity, their* and *other*). Education is

the desired mode of action (*study, teach, learn* and *inform*). We must anticipate (*achieve, strategy, via, future, expect, devise* and *imagine*) a movement of bringing about or into being (*invest, implement, improve* and *innovate*). Emphatically, we must exercise both indomitable will (*ensure, exploit, harness, complete, strategy, govern, manage, challenge* and *overarching* again) plus clear comprehension (*communicate, aware, access, open, all, scope* and *term*). These factors—will and understanding—can be linked through poetic, especially Romantic, imagination. [cf. Samuel Taylor Coleridge quoted in M. Ryle & K. Soper 2002 p.42-3] Perhaps those monumental pillars of practicality frame an impersonal gap where imagination and creativity are lacking.

The Vision is anxious to structure a public space even as it hankers after familiar surroundings.

Staff in higher education (paragraphs 69-72)

Figure 22 - Staff



This passage calls for training of academic staff to teach. The summons is made in view of changed conditions in higher education. It also calls for an independent review of all higher educational employment.

That call is as if to tell existing higher educational staff: 'Well done, you faithful public servants. You have endured too much for too long. For you this struggle is over. Your deliverance is at hand.' Here, a doctrine of salvation through personal works is invoked to relieve the oppressed. It may possibly project anxieties on the part of the conscientious Committee as author of this text: were our own capabilities, processes and resources adequate? Did we do justice to the task of designing, at least, a gateway to the future?

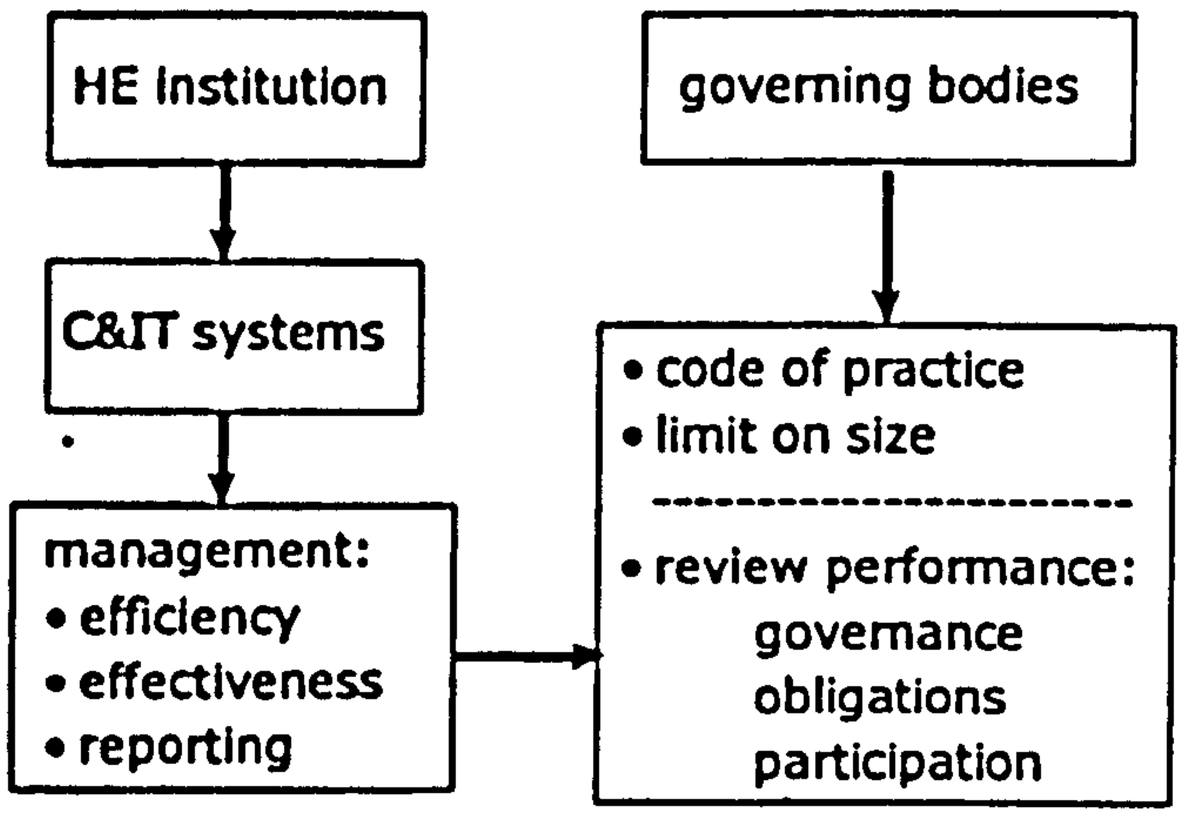
The language emphasises structure, especially in the work of artisans (*material, framework, pattern, norm*—from *norma* a set-square—and *depend* from *dependeo* to hang down). The structure or building may be a dwelling for families (*focus* a family, home or altar; *member* from *membrum* a family-sized apartment; and *isolate* from *insula* an island or—figuratively—a detached house for poor families). It is a site of agreeable commercial activity (*era* from *aera*: money, counters; *bargain* to agree terms; and *settle* to pay or to sit). We can see (*option* from *optos, optasia*; *probation* from *probo* to test, demonstrate) things through (*career* through life) to an end (*success* outcome, *succedo* to follow, take the place of; and *permanent* from *permaneo* to abide, remain to the end).

The proposals for formal frameworks suggest a discomfort with unstructured public spaces and an urge to agree conventions to mediate our public interactions. The Vision seems more at home with, say, a tenement or a long-house for communal living or with a street market for doing business face-to-face. This preference seems akin to the Dutch sensation of *gezellig*, explained as an environment that 'allows good times to happen ... cozy and inviting'. [A. Moskos 2003 p.4]

At this point, though, homely emotions must be set aside for a bracing review of public protocols and systems.

Management and governance of higher education institutions (paragraphs 73-76)

Figure 23 - Management and governance



The Vision seeks to improve the management and governance of higher educational institutions by applying procedures to the processes of operation and review: that is to say, of acting and of overseeing.

The section looks to apply a businesslike model of efficiency-seeking measures to the administrative and board-level functions of higher educational institutions, so as to routinise their activities and render them more readily accountable. The means of pursuing efficiencies relies largely on being able to 'realise the full potential'—not of 'staff ... and other resources', who are just to be more effectively used—but of communications and information systems. This conflates internal management ('to improve institutional effectiveness and efficiency') with external governance. For that fusion of ends, it prescribes processes for codifying practices, for limiting membership and for reviewing performance.

> Aside: We may incidentally recognise these activities in the critical stages of a project for dramatic performance: matching actions of scripting, casting and rehearsal.

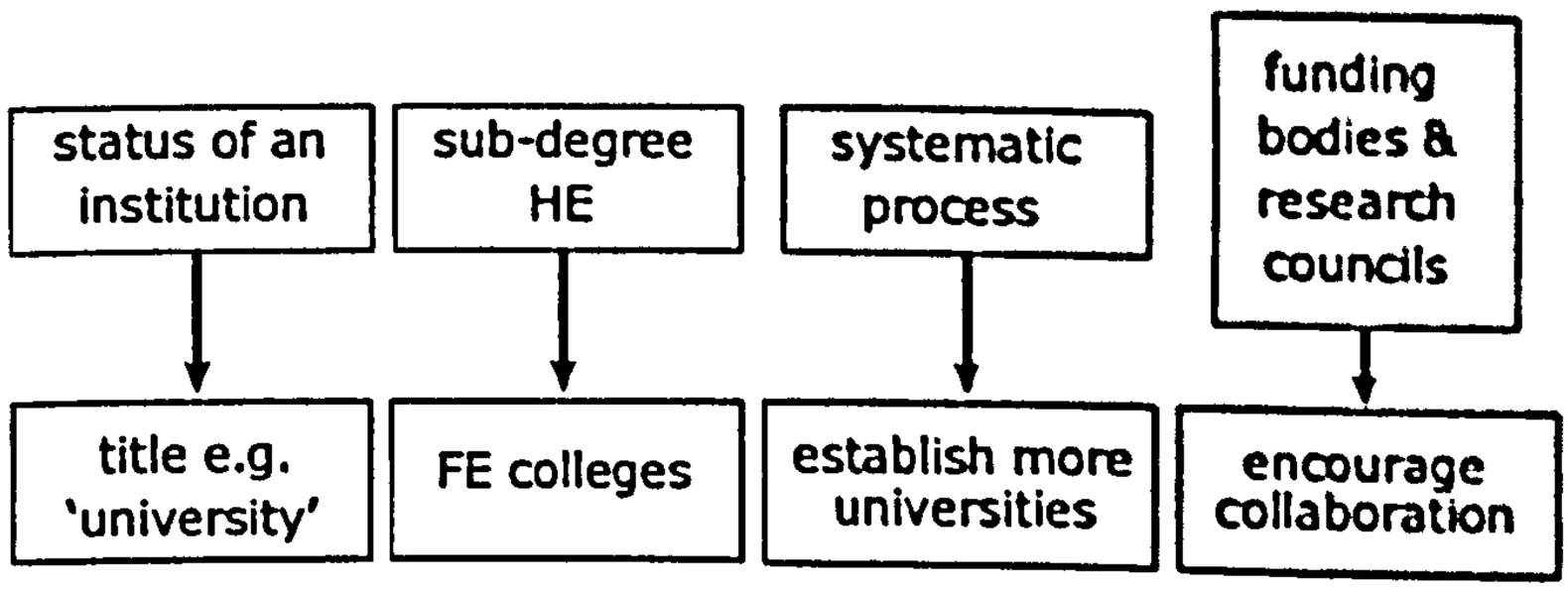
The language here sets a dramatic stage for adversarial politics of identity (*we, they, challenge* and *respond*). On that stage, we-they may project our-their roles effectively (*perform, dramatic, impress, publish* and *clarity*). The interplay is intense, between the systemic and practical on the one hand (*organise, resource,*

participate, govern, strategy, arrange, body and *member*) and ideal guidance on the other (*law, rule, principle, realise, reason, oblige* and *respect*). Codified frameworks, then, shall channel reforming energies through systems of public accountability into practical results.

Next we shall attend to the interplay of name and function in a variety performance, so to speak, of one-act playlets about outstanding issues in and around the sites of higher education.

The pattern of institutions which provide higher education (paragraphs 77-81)

Figure 24 - Pattern of providers



This miscellaneous section seeks to control institutional titles and roles in higher education, especially to distinguish between universities and colleges. It also promotes a formal process for controlling expansion of the university sector and calls for collaboration among diverse institutions.

For the long term, this section reinforces a dichotomy of provision expressed within a strict hierarchy: 'university' for higher education at degree level and above, and 'further education college' below degree level. Parity, overlap, oscillation, hybridity or reversals of status are all precluded by this structure. The word 'university' invokes an attribute of and reputation for academic zeal, situated in a remembered high, Humboldtian era of scientific inquiry of the cosmos. That reminiscence assumes an attitude of construing, recalling and fretting over the good times now passed. It exists in the pervasive condition of *dukkha* [G. Claxton 1990 pp.177-8]:

> ... all the uncomfortable aspects of being alive, both physical and psychological: the pain of dying; of losing a loved one; of guilty memories; of trying to cling on to the "good times"; of hankering for what you haven't got. In that state of mind the question may arise: 'Is it already too late to ...?', but the train of thought is overwhelmed by anxious confusion as to what if anything we can now do for the best.

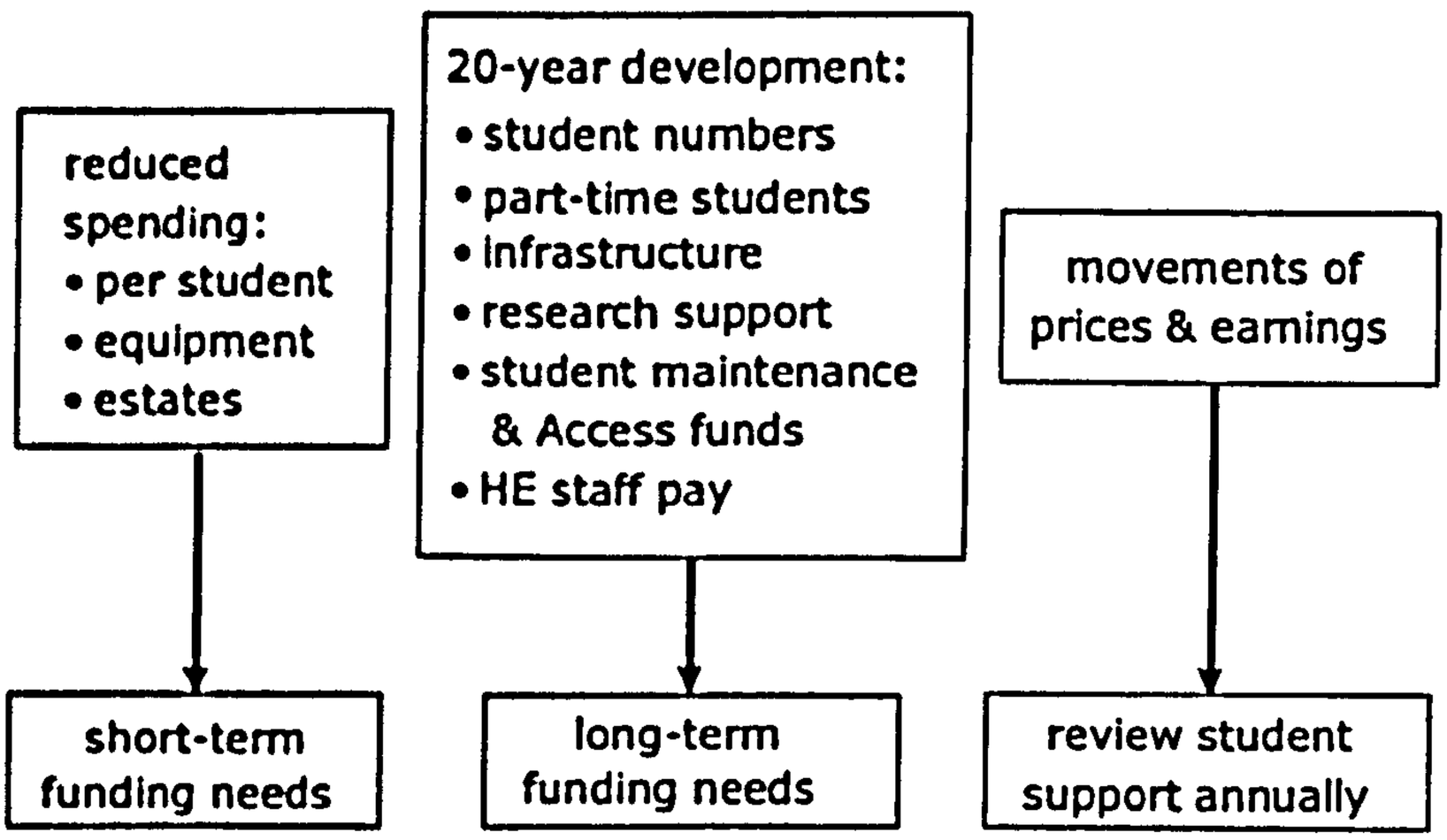
The language used here calls upon us to behave in particular ways. We should face up to matters: *provide* (to prepare for), *obvious* (*obviam* on the way, to meet), *courage, divert* and *(not)withstanding*. We should do so with heartfelt emotions: *strong, body, accord, courage* and *heart* (as the seat of feeling and mind). We should have good reason and vision: *clear, reflect, provide* (*provideo* to look forward to), *believe* (accept as true), *excuse* (*ex* plus *causa*) and *obvious* (*obviam* on account of) again. We must work together: *collaborate, college* (fellow

workers: *collega* a guild), *factor* (contributing to a result), *recommend* and *support* (encourage, collaborate), in a caring manner (*recommend*: *commend* a person to the care of; *provideo*: to care for; and *support*: to give help). We must clearly confront, and co-operate sympathetically in respect of, a particular prospect of the future.

The Vision now calls for urgent action to remedy present ills and work together toward long-term goals.

The funding requirement (paragraphs 82-89)

Figure 25 - Funding



This economic passage seeks to avert damaging cut-backs in public spending on higher education. To that end it outlines priorities for short-term and long-term funding, especially the priority of alleviating hardship among students. For the long term it gives estimates of additional annual funding required in 20 years' time.

To make long-range forecasts in an era of instability may seem wildly ambitious. The projections render the Vision a hostage to fortune, not least due to economic and demographic factors, even though the latter afford some predictive assurances about people living in the UK. The Committee displays an urge to express its judgements in numerical figures. The estimates here underpin the Summary Report's claim in paragraphs 2 to 9, responding to its terms of reference, to provide a 'vision for 20 years'. The full figures are played down in favour of minimum requirements—an odd opening gambit . Some proposed increases are explicitly omitted, while the increase due to a rise in student numbers is offset by a massive discount of almost 40% of that increase. The grounds for that discount are not apparent here, but may be linked to the broad 'scope for a reduction in costs' through technologies for communications and information (C&IT, paragraph 65). That suggests a funding strategy of renewing and extending all kinds of infrastructure, so as eventually to achieve a miracle of economy: increased capacity along with savings per student.

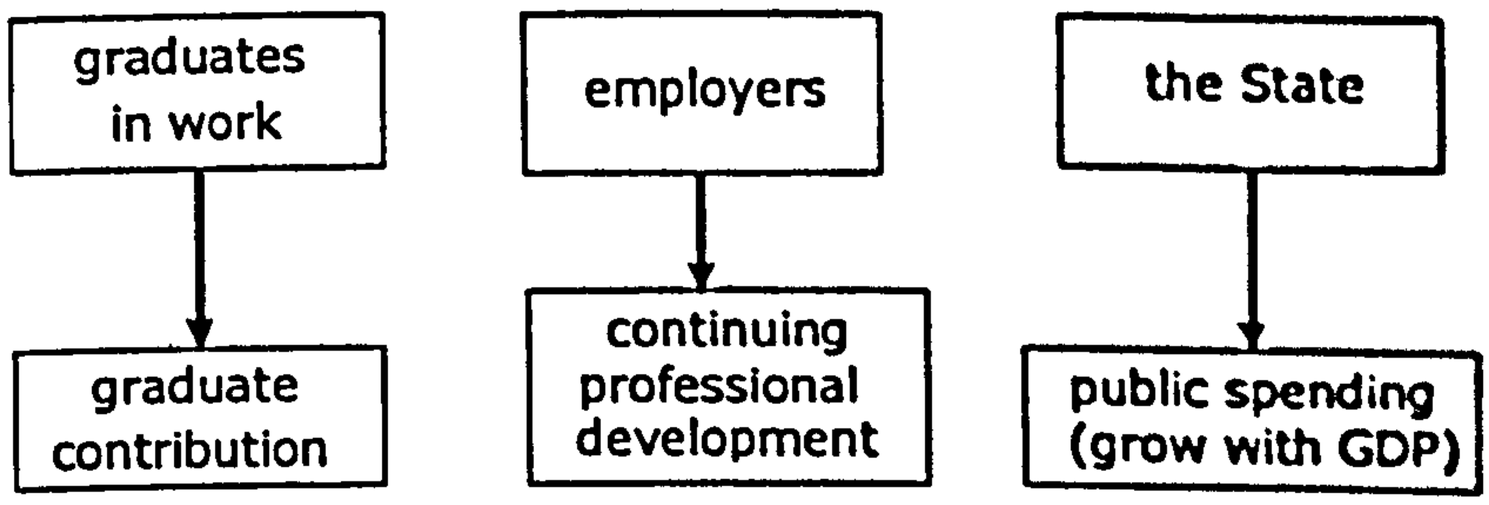
The language employed is much concerned with quantity and extent: *increase, expand, reduce, grow, develop, add, long, short* and *alleviate* (raise, relieve). At the same time, the section anxiously seeks to exercise sound

judgement: *level* (*libra* a balance), *critical, volume* (*volvo* to reflect on), *real* (not artificial), *mature* (grown up), *humanity* (as civilised), *proper, estimate* and *experience*. In that judgement, we both condemn and redeem: *damage* (*damno* to condemn; devote for destruction; *dapane* outgoing, extravagance; *dapto* to devour); *exacerbate* (*exacerbo* to make bitter speech) and yet *refurbish* (to polish, remove rust). This train of thought seems akin to restoring an estate of some kind to a well-managed condition. It comprises taking stock, making decisions as to what to discard and what to make good, then exercising judgement as to what is to be grown or acquired to attain a viable balance for the long term.

The next passage extends the themes of growth and improvement, and considers who should participate in building a community on such a notional estate.

Who should pay for higher education? (paragraphs 90-92)

Figure 26 - Payment



The Vision seeks to allocate responsibility for funding of higher education to individuals and groups in proportion to the extent of benefit they are predicted to derive from its awards.

Employers are supposed only to accept responsibility to the extent of their self-interest; that is to say, for the 'continuing education and training' from which their companies can expect to benefit directly: that of their employees. This link overlooks serious contingent factors in the prospect that arises from such benefit to staff, yet not to their sponsoring employers, in the general drive for flexibility. In this case, the flexible employees may be able to transfer among companies or even change their ways of making a living. What seems like a realistic, business-like view turns out to be unsound precisely in terms of companies' self-interest in retaining intellectual and practical capital.

The Vision absolves the UK State of responsibility for incremental funding of most higher education beyond that corresponding to the UK's gross domestic product (GDP) and retail prices index (RPI, in paragraph 89). Indeed, it appears to assume that those indices will signal continuing growth. It limits graduates' liability for contributing to the cost of their higher education to the extent of benefit, which is—rashly, perhaps, or ill-advisedly—assumed to occur at some point and to accrue in the long term. In these ways, the Vision harks back to periods of growth or at least of stability as a basis for economic forecasting. It projects that optimism onto individuals as economic agents. Employees and others are enjoined to become students for the prospect of graduating into well-paid work to repay the debts they incur. We may remember that cycle as the 'human battery' model of higher education. Its mechanism recalls the metaphor

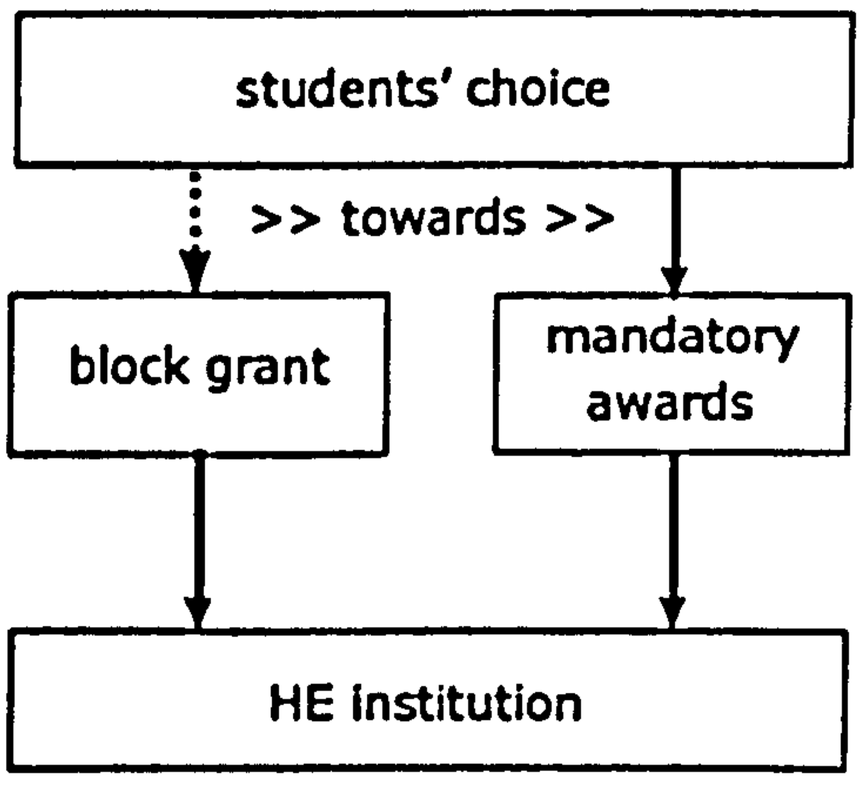
and device that underpins the plot of the film The Matrix: I.e. batteries of humans exploited for electrical energy. [A. Wachowski 1999] There, individuals are sacrificed—enslaved and exploited—to feed the network that powers a global system.

The language here, however, presents motifs of a community of people affirming their shared identity through an uplifting act of giving. The motifs include an upward, productive movement: *source* (*surgo* to raise on high, grow up or rise up to speak), *nation* (*nascor/gnascor* to be born, arise, produce) and *future* (*feo* to beget, spring up, be produced). The act of giving makes present and lets go: *devote* (consecrate or give up to); *access* (*cedo* to give up, yield ground), *attribute* and *contribute* (cf. tribute). Giving together confirms membership of the community and excludes non-celebrants: *participate* (to have a share), *economic* and *domestic* (*oikonomia* and *domus*, both with senses of management of a household or family), *attribute* (as belonging or appropriate to) and *contribute* (to a common fund, effort etc.) again. The Vision needs to be sure, statistically, on whom the State can variously rely or gamble as promising risk-takers, self-interested sponsors and reliable debtors in the long run.

The next section binds communal efforts into public forms. It richly presents public giving, holding and dispensing on demand as activities that continuously shape our institutions.

Funding learning and teaching (paragraphs 93-94)

Figure 27 - Grants



This part of the Vision seeks to align public funding of higher education mainly with students' uptake of places, rather than rely on a block grant from central government to its institutions. The proposal is tentative in its approach; it employs a step-wise experimental adjustment. The medium-term aim is to attain a stable basis for the institutions' budgeting by smoothing the public funding on a 3-year basis at a time.

In this model, higher education and the institutions that provide it do not exist as given or by right, but as a phenomenon with variable capacities in a market that caters for students as consumers. That proposal is informed by an ethos of investment for long-term pay-back. It implicitly contrasts with that bastion of long-term provision: a scheme of endowment. In the latter, we would expect substantial donations to be aggregated into a grant, the income of which could be distributed as loans to be repaid from the economic activity of small-

scale enterprises or individuals. [cf. A.T. Ariyaratne 1999 pp.65-6] We touched on the repayment model in the previous section; here the institution serves as a bank for distributing benefits to individuals. A vital difference between a proportionate subsidy and an endowment lies in the factor of control: in the former case there is variable control of release, at the discretion of the State; in the latter, regulation of a continuous flow from a reservoir.

In a few semantically rich expressions, the language of this section plays out some of the Vision's most compelling themes. It posits a compact mass that is fixed at an origin of time and space: *term* (finite), *block* (obstruction), *assess* (*assideo* to besiege, blockade), *body* (material frame), *target* (butt) and *impact* (*pango* to fix, freeze). Yet that mass opens onto several forms of continuity: *sudden (subeo* to approach gradually), *system* (a common structure), *flow* (glide along, in large quantity or numbers), *via* (through) and *way* (for passing along). The flow is regulated in many respects: *mandate* (to commit), *impact* (*pango* to stipulate by contract), *via* (by rule, virtue), *tuition* (administration during *tutela*: a period of looking after, sanctioning a ward's conduct), *assess* (impose), *accord* (agreement), *award* (order to be given), *reward* (recompense), *balance* (scales of justice) and *fund* (*fundus* a bound). It proceeds toward a result: *balance* (for weighing), *flow* again (abundantly), *follow* (after), *sudden* again (*subeo* to follow immediately after) and *target* again (that which is aimed at).

The telic (end-oriented) theme abundantly promises fulfilment: *term* (*terminus* limit), *belief* (in P A Angeles p.31: either unreasoned or deliberate), *fund* (for a purpose), *choice* (toward an outcome; *chosen* destined) and *follow* (to conform; cf. *full-* satisfying). It invokes *accord* (of harmony, agreement), *assess* (fix an amount), *award* (to settle with penalty or prize), *via* and *way* again (to carry, directly by rule or plan) and *system* (a complex whole, a body, articles of faith). Discretion is called for, by way of care and service: *accord* (*cor* heart), *belief* (OED *galaub-* loyalty, promise), *follow* (OED Gothic *fulla-fahjan* minister to the needs of), *found* (to strengthen) and *target* again (OED protect, shield). This theme continues through *award/reward* (cf. guard, guardian) and *tuition* again (Cassell / Liddell: *tueor, tut-* to watch, keep in good repair; in AM Prichard p.128, during a period of *tutela*).

The Committee's Vision, then, seeks to inaugurate an era of mass higher education. We must exercise discretion to ensure continuity as we regulate the flow of resources. Careful awards will then fulfil the desired result in terms of public service.

So where does that leave us?

You may well ask: Is that it? Have we arrived yet at an answer for what the Committee's Vision is all about? Well, probably not. At least we can say: not knowingly and not uniquely either. All the same, for what they may be worth, here are some closing remarks—with an odd thought-experiment—on the process used above and its effects.

The apparent 'findings' here are fortuitous. After all, the text whose language has churned through us was just a sample with arbitrary start and end points, omissions, additions and digressions noted along the way. The Committee, we have supposed, addressed us in the Vision. We have responded in the—or perhaps a—place of the address, by displacing the text by which the Vision (was) presented (to) us and thus positioned us in its scheme of events. Can we now supplant the text of the Vision, yet if we do, what shall we seek in its place? A

couple of analogies of seeing (that is to say, of the epistemological metaphor of knowing/science as seeing) may help to elucidate our position, up to a point.

> Aside: the metaphor of *metaphor* may well be what this dissertation is driving at, yet we cannot look directly into that eternal return here without risking textual vertigo. For various clear 'takes' on metaphor and other figures of speech, see for instance Thomas McLaughlin's chapter 6 *Figurative Language* in Lentricchia [1995] pp.80-90; plus other writers' accounts and citations, as indexed in that volume. The notion of 'texture' in New Criticism is also helpful in this regard: see for instance C. Baldick [2000] p.224.

We may enter the world of the Vision in reverse, as if 'through the looking-glass' (cf. C.L. Dodgson / Lewis Carroll's [1872] sequel of that name to *Alice in Wonderland*). Imagine if you will that each section above is made symmetrical in structure like a sandwich: précis, analysis plus synthesis (recordance), then an alternative précis. Each section would begin and end with a different diagram. We could reverse a few sections in the chapter, so as to derive the associations in them backwards. Across all sections, could we then tell which ones originally flowed forward and which came about (the other way round)?

> Aside: This need not seem bizarre, since many printed dictionaries translate in one direction, then the other, as if one could bridge cultural gaps by matching words and phrases. The computerised searching and multi-lingual tools that are now available on the Internet expand and accelerate the associative potentials and the power of allusion.

Even with all sections remaining as they were derived, if we were to compose the new fragmentary models into another Vision, what world would it portray or enable us to imagine? We do not pursue that tempting experiment here mainly because it would be out of keeping with the Vision's provenance. The Committee's Summary Report, we may surmise, never was a coherent whole; it was formed from a kaleidoscope, so to speak, of textual samples. It appears to offer a particular perspective applied to constellations of ideas; yet in these metaphors of seeing, the kaleidoscopic view and constellations are quite illusory.

> Aside: As in astronomy, a 'snapshot' view of particular, construed constellations more-or-less precisely locates the observer in space and time. With the help of linguistics and archaeology, we may in principle determine the provenance of a fragment of text or an artefact. At least, we may seek to associate it with the known points or trajectories of space-time co-ordinates of a cultural reconstruction, to date, of its makers and purveyors.

Scintillae in the fog

The recordances (analyses-with-syntheses) in chapters 5 to 8 have sought to reconstruct the language of the Vision's text through a profusion of themes. Each exercise has shattered pieces of text into a (figurative) thousand colourful shards. It arranged them in particular, yet somewhat arbitrary, constellations or mosaics. I hope that these approaches to the semantic 'loosening up' of a sample text will prove useful in similar contexts. Better still, beyond anything that is realised here, they may provoke students and scholars with other aims and other texts in view—perhaps yourself—to seek ways to break up discourses and make words speak and sparkle again, as if for the first time.

Appendix: References

This appendix lists the works cited in the chapters of this Dissertation.

For a classified listing of these references plus those of the Supplements on CD-ROM and sources of further reading, please refer to the document Classified Bibliography.doc in the Bibliography folder on the CD-ROM.

Conventions for references

The titles of source works (books, journals etc.) are shown underlined. Titles of articles, chapters etc. are shown in *italic* style.

For online sources, the web address is shown. In the electronic version of this document, it contains a hyperlink to the web site. The place and date of publication are shown if they are available.

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